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Families send out a message to health chiefs over maternity cuts

Worried families outside the Horton on Saturday. They gathered to voice their fears over maternity unit changes there

'WE MUST SAVE OUR HORTON'

Megan Archer
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A MOTHER or newborn baby will die if devastating cuts are made to Banbury's Horton Hospital, campaigners have said.

Hundreds of people – including new and expectant mums – gathered outside the hospital entrance on Saturday night to protest at the proposed cuts to the midwifery service.

Oxford University NHS Foundation Trust, which runs the unit, is planning to make Horton midwife-led by the end of September if more staff are not found. This means women experiencing difficulties would have to go elsewhere as no specialists would be on site.

But mum-of-three Lisa Marsdon, from Banbury, said the consequences of the cuts could be devastating.

She said: "With my first born I spent quite a few weeks in and out of hospital. I can't even imagine what that would have been like if I had to do that in Oxford. My second son was a high-risk pregnancy and it would have been really tough to get to Oxford. I do feel for mums who need a quick c-section. Somebody, whether it's a mother or a baby, is going to die, bottom line."

Keith Strangwood, chairman of Keep the Horton General campaign group, said the protest was held to raise public awareness. He said: "Anyone with a high risk birth – and there's no such thing as a low risk birth – they might have to be transferred to the JR in the middle of labour. And in rush hour that could take up to three hours."

As part of the protest, campaigners sang a specially-adapted version of One Direction's History.

It included the lyrics "Banbury's got a whole lot of history, we must keep the doctors there, at our maternity, The Horton has got a whole lot of history, so don't close it down, we can make some more, we can live forever."

MP for Banbury Victoria Prentis told the crowd: "I was born here. My children were cared for here. Lots of us are hoping to one day have our children here. We need to put a lot of pressure on this summer, we need to ask the difficult questions. I for one am not sure the Trust are doing everything they can."

Mum-to-be Sophie Streeton, 31, of Banbury, who is due in September, said: "As much as I want a natural birth, the idea that any complication could mean a 45 minute trip to the JR is terrifying."

A decision on the Horton will be made in late August. It says it is struggling to recruit enough middle-grade doctors for the unit to offer services safely.

In June the Banbury Cake revealed how the trust planned to save £2.2m by moving maternity consultants to the John Radcliffe and scrapping a specialist baby care unit.

To help fund the KTHG campaign, a new fundraising page has been set up. It has already raised nearly £800 and all the funds will go towards printing leaflets and other costs of running the group. For details on the page visit www.crowdfunding.justgiving.com/Savourhorton.

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Traders warned over booze sale

COUNCIL officers have warned residents and businesses they are taking zero-tolerance to serving alcohol to under 18s.

Cherwell District Council is asking people to work together to reduce opportunities for children to access alcohol over the summer holidays.

The council's lead member for public protection Tony Ilott said: "We are not intending to be killjoys – the exact opposite.

"We want our young people to enjoy their summer for all of the right reasons and that means being able to make good, safe decisions with a clear head.

"It is no secret that alcohol can cloud judgement and make people vulnerable. While incidents of child sexual exploitation are incredibly rare, they do happen and it is circumstances such as someone being drunk that perpetrators take advantage of.

Premises that sell alcohol to somebody under 18 can be fined up to £20,000 and at risk of closure, and anyone buying alcohol for a minor could be fined up to £5,000.

Action over drones

POLICE have issued new guidance about the use of "flying robots".

Thames Valley Police said unmanned aerial vehicles – known as 'drones' – are becoming more popular but warned "a minority of users continue to fly them irresponsibly."

The misuse of drones is a criminal offence, the force said. Users are not allowed to fly them higher than 400ft in altitude or further than 500 metres away horizontally without special permission from the Civil Aviation Authority.

Rail disruption kept to a minimum as lines close

Beginning of major railway work sees less chaos than predicted for commuters

Luke Sproule
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Engineering work to replace a railway bridge close to Walton Well road just north of Oxford Railway station.

PREDICTIONS of chaos on the railways proved unfounded on Monday morning as commuters dealt with the first weekday of travel since two sections of the line were shut.

Great Western Railway halted services between Oxford and Didcot Parkway on Saturday and between Oxford and Banbury on Sunday.

The closures will allow work to take place to protect a section of the track from flooding and to make signalling improvements and carry out repairs on bridges. Rail replacement buses are running between Oxford and Didcot parkway every 12 minutes.

There are also replacement services between Bicester Village station and Banbury and between Oxford and Banbury as well as from Didcot Parkway to Leamington Spa.

But some of the buses leaving Oxford station yesterday morning were not full and the station appeared to be quieter than usual.

Student Maria Gonzales, 22, had travelled to Oxford yesterday from London to visit a friend.

She said: "My journey has been okay. I did not particularly like having to change in Didcot and get a bus but it was fairly quick.

"I did not know about the closure until I travelled, if I had known I might have decided to come to Oxford Parkway instead."

Fellow commuter Aidan Collins, who had travelled into the city from Didcot, was pleased with the work. "It has been fairly well managed and run properly which is good," he said.

The line between Oxford and Didcot will reopen on August 15, with the Banbury line set to open again on Sunday.

The closure from Oxford to Leamington Spa and Bicester North, which also came into force on Saturday, will last until Monday, August 8 while the Oxford to Hanborough line will shut for five days from Wednesday.

Network Rail spokesman Matthew Thompson said: "We have been working hard over the past few months to ensure disruption to people using the service was minimised."

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Historic rail building is demolished after 165 years of service to network

Change signals end of era

Luke Sproule
lsproule@nqo.com

AFTER 165 years of seeing trains in and out of Banbury station the stop's signalmen have worked their last shift.

The London Marylebone to Birmingham Moor Street train that travelled through the station on Friday night was the last before the old signalling system was signed out of use after midnight on Saturday.

Work then began on a nine-day project to install new colour-light signals, new tracks and a new platform.

It will see trains between Oxford and Banbury suspended for the rest of this week.

Three hours after the 116-year-old south signal box at the station was handed over to engineers at Banbury it was demolished, with a few instruments salvaged for spares.

The similar north signal box will survive for another 10 weeks to allow tours, visits and events to give it a fitting send off.

Between August 10 and October 2 there will be free public guided tours and school visits which will demonstrate how signal boxes work and will teach about railway safety and the dangers of railway trespass.

rob kinchin-smith, of RPS Planning and Development, said he was keen to get as many people involved as possible.

Diggers move in to demolish Banbury's south singal box after its system was decommissioned on Saturday

He said: "As north box is due to go the way of south on October 8, any empty slot is an opportunity wasted.

"Given the educational role that heritage signal boxes present, we are particularly keen to see more groups from local primary and secondary schools as soon as the holidays are over."

More than 1,000 people have already signed up for the tours as well as local Cub, Scout, Beaver and Sea Scout groups and Kings Sutton and Harriers primary schools.

The north signal box is now switched off and disconnected but work will be carried out this week to make the bells, lights and levers work so that tours are as lifelike as possible.

To book a place visit banburynorth.youcanbook.me or for a customised visit contact the Project Crossover Steering Group at

Record green waste in county's gardens

GARDENERS in North Oxfordshire created records levels of rubbish last month, the latest figures from Cherwell District Council show.

In June, the council collected 2,627 tonnes of green waste, 200 tonnes more than ever before.

The council's lead member for clean and green Debbie Pickford said: "Gardeners have had the mixed pleasure of lush and colourful gardens, but more weeding duties.

"But our system is flexible enough cope with the increase and residents can be satisfied in the knowledge that all their garden and food waste is turned into a rich compost which is used on local fields to grow more crops."

Tasty treats at fair

BANBURY Food Fair is set to return to the Market Place.

The fair will celebrate the wide range of food and drink produced in the town and provide guests with a unique dining experience.

Visitors will also be provided with live-demonstrations and will be able to sample non-supermarket food, beer and wine.

The fair will take place in Banbury Market Place on Sunday August 21 from 10.30am to 4.30pm.

Guitar heroes night

A ROCKUMENTARY will be staged at The Mill Arts Centre to bring together the famous workings of Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton and Slash.

More than 20 guitars will be used on stage on Saturday, September 17, at the Banbury centre. The Story of Guitar Heroes will start at 8pm and tickets are £20. deTAILS AT: themillartscentre.co.uk

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Man bailed after late night brawl

A 29-YEAR-OLD man from Banbury has been arrested after a brawl involving 20 people broke out.

Police were called to reports of a fight in Hilton Road on Saturday at about 11.20pm.

A 29-year-old man and a 34-year-old man were injured in the scrap and were taken to Horton General Hospital for treatment. They have since been discharged.

Investigating officer Det Sgt Mike West based at Banbury police station said: "People living in the area will likely see ongoing police activity in the area while this incident is investigated."

A 29-year-old man from Banbury was arrested on suspicion of ABH and bailed until August 27.

Memories plea

AN OXFORDSHIRE charity supporting young families is appealing for people it has helped to share their memories for its 30th birthday.

Home-Start Banbury & Chipping Norton will be holding a party in September to celebrate three decades of work in the area.

Anyone who has ever used the service, volunteered or worked for the charity is called on to donate pictures, stories and quotes on their experience.

Senior organiser Jane Skelton said: "The support our fantastic volunteers have given to hundreds of local families has been life-changing.

"Turning 30 is a great opportunity to get everyone together and celebrate the impact we have had giving families the best start in life."

Volunteers are also being sought by the charity to support local families.

For more information visit home-startbanbury.org.uk.

Show blooming

"ONE of the best flower a produce shows in the county" returns to Oxfordshire this month.

The South Newington Flower and Produce Show will be held this year on Saturday, August 13, from 2pm to 4.30pm. It will include a marquee with flower and produce displays, a performance from the South Newington Occasional Singers performance, a Tai Chi display and a children's fancy dress competition.

The village can be found just off the A361, almost exactly half way between Chipping Norton and Banbury.

More information can be found at southnewington.co.uk

Gym gear stolen

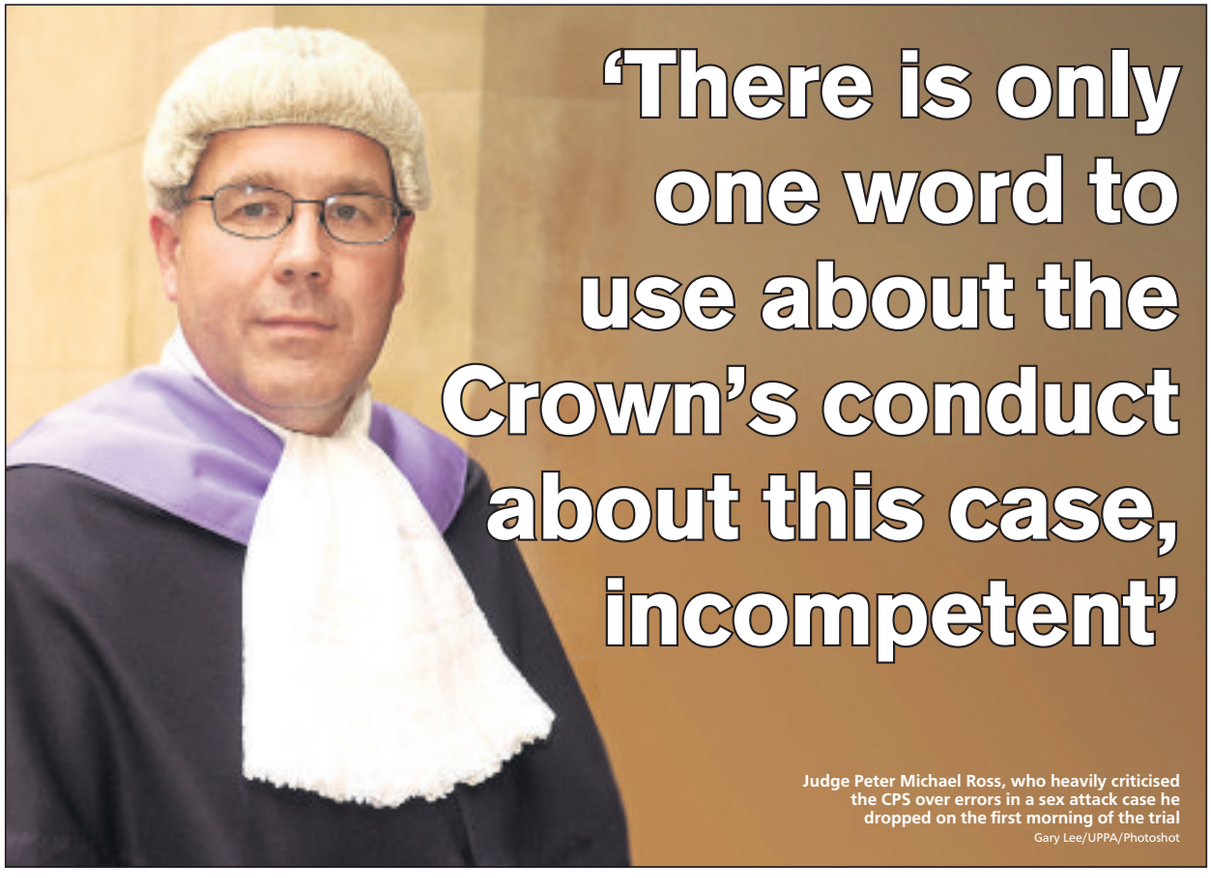
THIEVES stole gym and exercise equipment from a garage in Ambrosden. Thames Valley Police said the offenders got into the outbuilding in Briar Furlong sometime between Monday and Wednesday.

Call 101 with information.

Storytelling day

BRANTANO in Ruscote Avenue is raising funds for Macmillan Cancer Support with a story-telling day on August 10 from 11am to 3pm.

Angry judge attacks CPS as sex attack case against man is dropped over 'serious failures'



'There is only one word to use about the Crown's conduct about this case, incompetent'

Judge Peter Michael Ross, who heavily criticised the CPS over errors in a sex attack case he dropped on the first morning of the trial

Gary Lee/UPPA/Photoshot

Annabal Bagdi
abagdi@nqo.com

A JUDGE has blasted the prosecution service for its "incompetent" handing of a sex offences case which "should never" have been brought to court.

Judge Peter Ross slammed the Crown Prosecution Service for pursuing allegations against a man despite there being no realistic prospect of conviction.

His damning remarks came moments after he discharged the man, who we have decided not to name, on the first day of his trial following a lack of evidence offered by the prosecution.

The CPS has since bowed down to the judge, accepting it should not have persisted with the case.

During his tirade at Oxford Crown Court on Monday, Judge Ross said: "There is only one word to use about the Crown's conduct about this case, incompetent.

"I am told these cases are given the closest care and attention. If that is the case, I dread to think what is happening to those cases that don't get the closest care and attention. To say what has happened in this case is regrettable, would be the understatement of the year.

"I'm very angry, yes. Why? Because this court is here to do justice and whatever the outcome, no one can say that justice has been done. When people don't do their jobs properly in the criminal justice system, justice is at risk."

The man previously denied two counts of sexual assault alleged to have taken place last year.

But on the morning of the trial, Judge Ross expressed his "grave concerns" to prosecutor James Keeley of the CPS' plans to continue with the trial after reading the case papers himself in "disbelief".

The former prosecution barrister criticised the CPS' refusal to call a witness initially relied upon - whose evidence would have supported the defendant's version of events.

Mr Keeley claimed the witness' evidence was served to the defence by mistake, blaming an unfortunate "administrative" error.

But Judge Ross denounced the claims, deeming the excuse "simply preposterous" and "impossible to comprehend", adding the Crown had a "duty" to call the witness.

He went on to say refusal to call the witness would have forced the defence to quiz the alleged victim on matters which would have been "humiliating" for her.

The judge added: "It is terrible that the Crown was prepared to put her into that position.

"A prosecutor, like an investigating officer, must look at all the evidence and pursue matters that lead away from the defendant, as well as matters that lead towards the defendant's guilt."

Judge Ross also said it was "wholly unfair" the man and his barrister, Alexander Taylor-Camara, discovered the prosecution intended to add an additional charge of attempted rape to the indictment on the morning of trial, despite having about nine months to prepare.

Speaking to the Banbury Cake, Mr Taylor-Camara said he was "taken aback" by this, claiming the case was already "pretty weak".

He said: "The CPS has to make hard decisions, even if it is not to the liking of the complainant. Merely just saying 'we are going to prosecute' does not help anyone."

The defence barrister went on to say the man had been unable to move on with his life while waiting for the trial, adding: "All of the damage has already been done. There are going to be people who are still regarding him as a sexual predator and somebody who has assaulted somebody, irrelevant of the result.

"He has had to deal with the smearing eyes and looks and rumours, in the best way he can, knowing that people are viewing him in that way and the only way he can clear his name is when the case has concluded."

A Thames and Chiltern Crown Prosecution Service spokesman said: "We acknowledge the Judge's comments and the Chief Crown Prosecutor has already spoken to the Judge in person.

"We accept that we should have made the decision to drop this case earlier in the proceedings. The case will now be reviewed by a senior prosecutor and lessons learnt from any identified failings."

In January this year, Judge Ross condemned the CPS for its dealing with a case which saw jurors acquit Jed Francis of raping a woman twice outside Oxford Magistrates' Court.

The judge deemed the case "troubling" because of "serious failures" by prosecutors, who should have realised there was no realistic prospect of conviction.

But the CPS told the Banbury Cake prosecutors were satisfied there was enough evidence to secure a conviction. In 2014 we revealed that Thames Valley's Crown Prosecution Service was one of the worst performing in the country.

A damning report into the CPS division, which handles prosecutions at Oxfordshire's crown and magistrates' courts, highlighted failings that include losing too many trials, bad decision-making and problems with domestic violence cases.

Triumphant Moreton-in-Marsh bowlers receive the Burma Star Memorial Cup. Left to right: Peggy Harrison, Tom Harrison, Sheelagh Orchard, Rod Dix and Brenda Dix

Veterans' cup given a new life

Tournament in memory of war veterans revived to aid Help For Heroes

KieranDavey
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A BOWLS tournament played in memory of Second World War veterans has made a comeback after a gap of four years.

The Burma Star Memorial Cup competition was played for many years in the Banbury area in honour of former servicemen who served in the Burma Campaign between 1941 and 1945.

Last week, eight teams took part in a revitalised competition in Adderbury after a request from a veteran's widow that the tournament be reinstated.

Alan Orchard, a keen bowler in Banbury, had previously kept the cup but when he died last year aged 89, his wife Sheelagh asked Adderbury Bowls Club if they would take on the organisation.

Mrs Orchard said: "It has been a wonderful afternoon and Alan would have been so pleased to see his wish come true.

"I hope this tournament continues for many years to come and that it is a lasting tribute to all Burma veterans."

The cup was originally bought by the Burma Star Bowls Club, formed in the 1960s by local veterans, and for many years was played for by Banbury bowls clubs.

But over the years veterans became fewer in numbers and those remaining were too old and frail to organise the tournament – last held in 2012.

Fittingly, this year's event was also held on the first anniversary of Mr Orchard's death.

Adderbury Bowls Club captain Bryan Ogilvie said: "This club is proud to have been asked to host this competition.

"It is our intention to run it every year and if this year is anything to go by, it will continue to be a successful day of great bowls."

Teams from Adderbury, Banbury, Bloxham, Woodford Halse, Middle Barton, Byfield and Moreton-in-Marsh all took part. Moreton-in-Marsh were the winners on the day, and received the trophy from Mrs Orchard.

The club was also given £174, raised through entry fees, a raffle and a whisky draw. The money will be donated to military charity Help for Heroes.

Force aims to protect officers

THAMES Valley Police is to adopt a seven point plan to protect police officers from assaults.

More than 900 officers in the force were attacked while on duty last year. The programme starts with the assertion that assaults on officers should be investigated to the same high standards as those applied to the investigation of assaults on members of the public.

It goes on to state the victim code applies to all victims, whether police officers and staff or members of the public. It also states the injured officer's supervisor must ensure their divisional commander is made aware to provide welfare support.

The assaulted officer and their supervisor must complete an accident report and to achieve a successful prosecution, the best evidence must be provided.

Graham Smith, Chairman of Thames Valley Police Federation said: "Gone are the days when we should be expected to be assaulted and accept that it is part of the job."

Tablets replace hospital charts

TABLET computer systems, which are replacing bedside charts, were shown to a health minister Lord Prior during a visit to Oxford's hospitals last week.

The Parliamentary Under Secretary was shown a digital programme called the System for Electronic Notification and Documentation, which involves staff inputting vital signs such as heart rate and blood pressure into tablet computers by patients' beds, at the John Radcliffe Hospital.

Linking to patient barcode wristbands to identify them, it also gives advice on how to manage patient care and displays any deterioration in their condition.

Dr Peter Watkinson, a consultant in intensive care medicine, explained how SEND will work.

The system is at Banbury's Horton General Hospital, the Churchill Hospital and Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre, Oxford and and will have been rolled out at the JR by the end of August.

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Chamber's appeal for BID views

WARDENS may be employed to patrol Banbury's town centre and watch out for beggars if plans for a new business-led project go ahead.

The town's Chamber of Commerce has put forward a proposal to set up a Business Improvement District, a scheme funded by local businesses which would back projects to benefit the High Street.

A consultation is under way for the scheme for businesses to say what they would like money to be spent on.

Leading the consultation is South Midlands based company Heartflood, and spokesman Chris Gregory said he had received a positive reaction to the idea so far.

The consultation is set to finish in September, and in the meantime businesses are being encouraged to contact Heartflood and fill out their survey on the scheme.

Once the consultation is completed, the Chamber of Commerce will put forward a final proposal which will be voted on in a referendum of businesses.

Interested parties can contact Heartflood on 07854 027080 or chris@heartflood.co.uk

Holiday boost

MORE staff have been bought in to deal with the high demand for summer activity days in North Oxfordshire.

Every year Cherwell District Council run holiday hubs for children whose parents may be working during the week, but this year the sessions have nearly sold out already.

The recreation and sports team has now made an extra 20 places available for sessions in Banbury, Bicester and Bloxham between now and September 2.

Neighbours worried over increased traffic generated by scheme for 69 new homes

Villagers' safety fears over college's plan for housing

Kieran Davey
kdavey@nqo.com

Jesse Crosse, front, with fellow villagers and part of the affected land behind Spring Lane

LIVES could be put at risk if developers are allowed to build up to 60 new homes on the edge of a North Oxfordshire village, campaigners have warned.

Brasenose College has proposed to build on the site off Station Road in Cropredy, but villagers say the new development will disrupt the character of the town and lead to overcrowding.

Residents in the village, which has a population of about 800, have now started a campaign and petition in an effort to stop the application from being accepted.

Jesse Crosse, a member of the action group CROPPERS (Cropredy Residents Opposing Planning Permission on Exquisite Rural Sites), said: "Villagers are concerned about many aspects of the proposal including the ludicrously high volume of traffic entering Station Road which is extremely busy at peak periods.

"No doubt the developer will present favourable traffic volume statistics but in real-world terms, locals know how congested the road can get.

"This is especially the case at school run time when there is a large influx of cars bringing children to school.

"We believe lives may be put at risk if this goes ahead. The whole idea is absurd and all the residents know it."

The proposal comes two years after an application was submitted by David Wilson Homes to build 67 homes on the land, close to Spring Lane.

But the plans were withdrawn following objections from villagers.

Mr Crosse, who lives on Cherry Fields which runs parallel to Spring Lane, added: "Families moved in to their Spring Lane homes expecting the secluded position was protected by a conservation area.

"Now they face the prospect of over 100 cars passing within a few feet of their doors at peak periods with a steady stream of vehicles throughout the day.

"If the application succeeds their village life will be converted into an urban existence they didn't choose, noise and exhaust emissions from vehicles queuing to get on to Station Road in the mornings pervading their homes."

As part of the campaign last week members of CROPPERS knocked on 283 doors to record the views of house owners. Of those, 56 were empty because of the holiday season while 203, 89 per cent of those asked, were "strongly opposed" to the development.

Developer Catesby Estates, working on behalf of the college, held a public meeting in the village on June 15 and heard objections from campaigners.

Mr Crosse, an automotive journalist, said the village was deeply disappointed with the college.

He added: "Brasenose continues to disregard the distress it is causing to many people in this close-knit community, many of whom have lived here for generations."

No one from Brasenose College was available for comment before the Banbury Cakewent to print.

Challenge on children's homes rejected by court

A HIGH Court challenge against plans to cut funding to more than half of Oxfordshire's children's centres has been dismissed.

Oxfordshire County Council was facing a judicial review of the process that led to its controversial reorganisation of children's services, which are due to come into effect next year.

But yesterday afternoon the High Court confirmed the case has been dismissed. Mr Justice Langstaff is due to hand down a ruling on a separate day.

The decision was welcomed by the county council, which said it would continue with the changes to children's centres.

Melinda Tilley, cabinet member for children, education and families added: "Clearly I'm pleased with the decision of the High Court to dismiss the application for the judicial review.

"It has been a matter the council has taken extremely seriously.

"We have sought to defend our decisions throughout, and are pleased that the court's decision now brings these particular matters to a close.

"We are creating a new service that will meet the needs and aspirations of some of the most vulnerable children in Oxfordshire.

"I'm very aware of the strength of feeling in relation to this, and have always sought to reassure the users of our children's centres that we will do all we can to continue to provide needed support and help."

The bid for a judicial review was launched by two parents on behalf of their children, who cannot be named for legal reasons.

They were not available for comment last night.

The council shake-up could result in funding being pulled from 31 of 44 children's centres and two of seven early intervention hubs after March.

Extra cash for needy students

SCHOOLS in Oxfordshire will be handed £18.7m in the next academic year to help their "disadvantaged" pupils.

New figures from the Department for Education showed 17,677 of the 81,449 pupils in the county would be eligible for pupil premium money from September.

Almost one in three pupils in Oxford East are eligible, a higher percentage than any other part of Oxfordshire.

Pupil premium is given to schools to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap with their more affluent peers, as well as supporting children whose parents serve in the armed forces.

Schools may use the money in a number of different ways, such as hiring more staff to work with disadvantaged children or buying more books and learning materials to help them.

Primary schools get £1,320 for each eligible child while secondary schools get £935.

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Deep message submerged in beautiful tale of the sea

SHE'S long campaigned for a sequel to the Oscar-winning Finding Nemo, but even Ellen DeGeneres – who voiced blue tang Dory in the 2003 underwater animation – never imagined that when it did eventually happen, she'd be the main character.

"It really just became content for my show," the 58-year-old says of her 13-year-long crusade, which she made no secret of on her popular syndicated talk show, The Ellen DeGeneres Show.

"Every sequel that came out for every other movie, it was just like, 'Oh my God, are you kidding me?' And then it just became a running joke."

After a pause, teasing, she adds: "He ruined it," referring to director and Pixar veteran Andrew Stanton. "My joke is over, because he did [make a sequel]. Now I have no more jokes."

But if anyone can anticipate their voice being heard, it's multi-Emmy-winning DeGeneres, who has a collective total of 120 million social media followers.

That's not always been the case, though. Before landing her hit talk show, now in its 13th season, just a few months after Finding Nemo opened in cinemas, the Louisiana-born host, comedian, actress and writer hadn't worked in three years.

"I had no job offers at the time," she recalls, quick to credit Stanton for giving her a valuable platform with Pixar, the animation studios also behind hits Inside Out, Toy Story and WALL-E.

Finding Nemo, she says, "certainly saved my life in many ways".

"And just the confidence Andrew had [in me]," she adds. "I don't know if he was even aware of my situation because he's so emerged in his world; he probably didn't realise I wasn't working and that I wasn't desirable.

"If he knew I wasn't desirable, he may not have asked for me," she teases. "People would have said, 'Why do you want her?'"

Far from just good timing, DeGeneres shone as the upbeat, friendly blue fish, who captured the audience's heart with her short-term memory loss and quirky lines ('Just keep swimming!'), and deserves to take centre sea in its 3D computer-animated follow-up.

A tale of self-acceptance, the movie catches up with Dory one year on, and finds her living happily in the reef with Marlin (Albert Brooks) and Nemo (Hayden Rolence). The tide turns, however, when she suddenly remembers she has a family, and embarks on a life-changing adventure across the ocean in a bid to find them.

Enlisting the help of her friends and three of California's prestigious Marine Life Institute's (MLI) most intriguing residents – Hank (Ed O'Neill), a cantankerous octopus who frequently gives employees the slip; Bailey (Ty Burrell), a beluga whale convinced his biological sonar skills are on the fritz; and near-sighted whale shark Destiny (Kaitlin Olson) – Dory discovers the magic within flaws, friendships and family.

"It's amazing to me that Dory has resonated with people so much," muses DeGeneres of the film-makers' decision to focus on Dory's past.

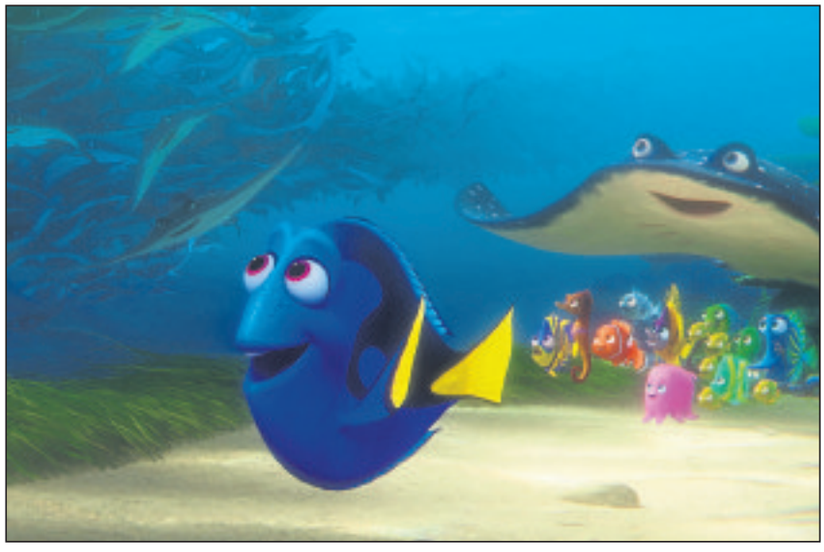
"Dory was such a big part of Finding Nemo that it makes sense people might wonder about her journey. We want to see how it worked out for her."

And while family is a central theme, the comedian is keen to stress that the story is not limited to ancestry.

"The story is the journey of, 'Where are her parents?', what happened to her and how she got separated from them.

She's looking as any child would do, but it's not about a mother and a father, it's not about blood relations, it's about who makes you feel good, and who gets you and supports you for all of who you are.

"That to me is what family and what home is," concludes DeGeneres.



SO MANY STINGRAYS: In Finding Dory, memories of her past are sparked for forgetful blue tang Dory when a stingray migration whizzes by her. Featuring the voice of Ellen DeGeneres

Cake Bookworm

Truly, Madly, Guilty **by Liane Moriarty is published in hardback by Michael, Joseph, priced £12.99 (ebook £9.99)**

The Australian author of the international bestselling books The Husband's Secret and Big Little Lies (which is set to become an HBO TV series in the US), is back with her latest domestic thriller. This time the story explores the repercussions of a middle-class neighbourhood barbecue in Sydney with a group of couples and their children, which goes hideously wrong. What actually occurred on that fateful day emerges through glimpses of the characters both before and after the catastrophic event, as they cope, or struggle to cope with what happened. As always, Moriarty takes us on an emotional roller coaster of a journey, leaving the reader desperate for answers. Moriarty's skill is in the way she paints her characters; they are seemingly very ordinary and real, but as the narrative unravels, we see the complex nature of people and their impulses. If you are looking for a book to devour from cover to cover this summer, this is it.

Do Not Say We Have Nothing **by Madeleine Thien is published in paperback by Granta, priced £12.99 (ebook £8.54).**

Madeleine Thien's third novel is a deeply profound and moving tale where music, mathematics and family history are beautifully woven together in a poetic story. Opening at the end, the narrative jumps forwards and backwards continually, starting in 1989 in both Hong Kong and Vancouver. Thien explains how two sisters survived the coming of the Red Guard, the drama of Tiananmen Square and aggressive land reforms. A master storyteller, Thien moves on to describe the enigmatic Sparrow, a genius classical music composer, his otherworldly cousin Zhuli and his obstinate and gifted best friend Kai. In the modern day, Kai's daughter Marie is the ever-questioning mathematician who is desperately repairing the story of her splintered family. Full of wisdom and complexity, comedy and beauty, Thien has delivered a novel that is both hugely political and severe, but at the same time delicate and intimate, rooted in the tumultuous history of China.

Lily And The Octopus **by Steven Rowley is published in paperback by Simon & Schuster, priced £12.99 (ebook £5.99)**

This is the of Ted, a man living with the love of his life, Lily the sausage dog. Rowley perfectly captures the heart-rending journey that man's best friend takes us on from adoring them as puppies to that awful last trip to the vet. The excitement of Lily's character brings the book to life. The octopus in the story is a tumour on Lily's head, and Ted's battle to come to terms with losing Lily makes for a heartfelt exploration of grief.

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Consumer champions Which? have now joined the thousands of customers who recognise that Cloudy2Clear Windows really are a business that you can TRUST. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has received the coveted 'Which Trusted Trader' status after going through a rigorous accreditation process entirely focussed on customer service.

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Locally Cloudy2Clear service the Oxford, Banbury & Abingdon areas and manager James Miller agrees that this approach is a major factor in his success. 'The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated as both my customers and, obviously a body as nationally important as Which? now recognise.'

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Cleaning equipment company could create up to 50 more jobs in hi-tech home

Firm moves to new HQ

Hannah Somerville
hannah.somerville@nqo.com

WORK has finished on a new state-of-the-art headquarters for one of the Banbury's best-known employers.

The complex, which is the size almost two football pitches, near Junction 11 of the M40, will be ready for hundreds of staff from cleaning company Kärcher UK to move in this Autumn.

It has been constructed on empty land at Banbury Point and is almost double the size of the firm's current base in Beaumont Road.

Operations director Julia Streeter said: "We're delighted that the construction has now been completed and the new building looks fabulous.

"This new headquarters will be a very different environment and will reflect the advances the company has made and its plans for the future."

Since 1978 the German firm, which makes a range of cleaning equipment for consumers and businesses, has had its UK head office in Banbury.

In that time it has grown from a team of eight staff to one of 300 people and this move could create 50 more jobs.

The new three-storey building will feature offices, an academy, a retail centre and training facilities with a warehouse and workshop section to allow for expansion.

Mark Venner and Julia Streeter from Kärcher, centre, with representatives from AC Lloyd, development

Ms Streeter added: "We are growing rapidly but remaining close to our Banbury roots has always been at the centre of our plans due to the expertise and loyalty of our staff.

"Final fit-out on the site will be completed by September, ready for our expanding team to move into."

Work on the building, which is located on the 6.4-acre Banbury Point site owned by Leaming-ton based developers AC Lloyd, began in October 2015.

AC Lloyd director Des Wynne said: "We worked closely with Kärcher from the outset to produce this high profile landmark building to its specific requirements, and we are particularly pleased to have had the opportunity of assisting the growth of this successful international company."

In June this year 50 employees at Kärcher UK took part in the annual Midnight Walk for Katherine House Hospice, an Adderbury-based provider of specialist end-of-life care that has touched the lives of many employees, for its 25th anniversary.

The team walked 10 miles throughout the night to raise vital cash for the charity.

Campaigners' hope as drug shows promise

CAMPAIGNERS for better treatment of Alzheimer's disease in Oxfordshire have welcomed a groundbreaking drug that reportedly stopped brain deterioration for the first time.

Research presented by scientists at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference 2016 showed the drug LMTX may slow brain shrinkage in some people with the disease by up to a third.

Jeannie Pyle, Alzheimer's Society services manager for Oxfordshire, said the result was not conclusive but offered glimmers of hope.

She added: "While it's disappointing to see another large clinical trial for Alzheimer's disease fail to meet its goal, there appears to have been some striking improvements for the subset of people who took the drug on its own. There are still lots of questions to answer before we know how promising this new treatment could be, but after years of failure we are now starting to see glimmers of hope for dementia drug trials."

She said scientists still needed to discover why the drug didn't appear to work in those already taking different medication for Alzheimer's disease.

The LMTX drug failed to meet its goal of improving cognition, including attention, memory and language, and ability to carry out everyday tasks in 891 people with Alzheimer's disease.

But when the 85 per cent of participants already taking existing treatments for the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease were excluded, researchers reported improvements in cognition, functional abilities and brain volume among those taking LMTX.

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Oxfordshire Listings

Events

THURSDAY

A Midsummer Night's Read Book Talk: Bicester Library, Franklins House, Wesley Lane, Bicester. Come and talk about books with other friendly readers. 2.30pm. Free. 01869 252181.

2121 (Abingdon) Sqn Air Training Corps: 2121 (Abingdon) Sqn premises, Wootton Road, Whitecross, Abingdon. 7.15pm. £8 per month. 01235 538955.

Abingdon Young Farmers: Manor Farm, Marcham, Abingdon. Social and sporting events, talks and visits to local places of interest. 7.45pm.

Build It! Creative Science Workshop (ages six-10 years): Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot. Make a leaning tower of pasta, create engineering masterpieces and craft paint covered marble mazes. 1.30pm. £13. Or £20 if combined with Culinary Chemistry. 01235 515144.

Culinary Chemistry Creative Science Workshop (ages six-10 years): Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot. How does popping candy pop? What makes sherbet fizz? How can cabbage change colour? Look at the science of snacks. 10.30am. £13. Or £20 if combined with Build It! workshop. 01235 515144.

Drayton Sequence Dance: Drayton Village Hall, Lockway, Drayton. 7.30pm. £2. 01235 531701.

Drop In and Create: 5,4,3,2,1... Action! (all ages): Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot. Inspired by the Shadowlight Artists exhibition in the gallery, drop in creative activities explore the moving image. Activities unsupervised and designed for children and their adults to enjoy together. 10am. Free. 01235 515144.

Family History helpdesk: Oxfordshire History Centre, St Luke's Church, Temple Road, Cowley. Oxfordshire Family History Society advisors are available to help you research your family tree, whether in Oxfordshire or beyond. 10am. Free. 01865 358151.

Indoor Bowls (short-mat): Drayton Village Hall, Lockway, Drayton. 1.45pm. 01235 528402.

Jewellery Making: Gluck, 8 London Street, Faringdon. Introduction to the techniques of creating bead jewellery. 10am. £25. 07974 081526.

Men's Basketball: Oxford Spires Academy, Glanville Road, Oxford. 8pm. £5. 07827 331593.

Oxford City Girls Football Club: Oxford City Football Club, Marsh Lane, Marston. 5.30pm. Free for first 12 training sessions. 079008 32429.

Oxford's Great War – Family Thursdays: Museum of Oxford, Oxford Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford. Drop-in every Thursday to find out about Oxford and WW1 in our Oxford's Great War exhibition. Make your own soldier's medal and explore the exhibition with a gallery trail. 10.30am. Free. 01865 252334.

Ping Pong Parlour: Wahoo & The Glee Club, 3-5 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford. Seven indoor tables for general play, games, competitions and coaching. No need to book, just turn up and play. Equipment provided. 12pm. Free. 07795 122280.

Ramblers walk: Town car park, Watlington. 6½-mile walk via three villages. Pub stop at end. 10am. 01865 891147.

Rhythm and Dance: Rugrats and Halfpints, Beaumont Road, Banbury. 11am. Free with standard entrance price to centre. 01295 250060.

Sequence & Ballroom dancing: Woodstock Social Club, 44 Oxford Street, Woodstock. Learn 7.30-8.45pm. Practice until 10.30pm. £2. 01993 812094.

Story Book Pottery – The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin: No Two Things, 120 Broadway, Didcot. Each Thursday afternoon at No Two Things sit down at 1.30pm and 3.45pm to listen to a children's book and then create a piece of pottery inspired by that week's story. This week make a Mr Brown ornament. For the little ones and their parents. £8. 01235 511550.

Summer Trails and Activities: Museum of the History of Science, Broad Street, Oxford. Discover amazing instruments and devious devices: help yourself to trails and activities. Drop-in. 12pm. Free. 01865 277280.

FRIDAY

Bingo: Marston Royal British Legion, Hadow Road, Marston. 7.30pm. Free. 01865 243991.

Club Rio: Marlborough Club, Broadway, Didcot. The venue for over 30s featuring dance music from the 70s, 80s and 90s right through to the present day. £5. 9pm. £5. 07789 428794.

Musical In A Day – Experience Annie! (ages seven to nine): Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot. Learn the songs and then put together your own version to perform in front of friends and family. No experience necessary. A short performance for friends and family will take place at 4.30pm. 10.30am. £30. 01235 515144.

SATURDAY

Art, Science and Me! Saturday Science Club: Pegasus Theatre, Magdalen Road, Oxford. Join the Science Oxford LIVE family team for an environmentally friendly culinary adventure as we explore why people eat insects and the future of food. 1pm and 4pm. £9 adult/£6 child. 01865 812150.

Bicester and Kidlington Ramblers: Farnborough Hall, Farnborough. Leisurely nine-mile circular walk. Picnic lunch. Leader Lionel Howse. Park in car park by the lake. 10am. 07821 147891.

Bitten Street: Oxford Castle Quarter, New Road, Oxford. Oxford's monthly street food market, featuring a rotating selection of the best local and visiting street food. Plus local craft beer, signature Bitten cocktail, mocktail and soft drinks from the Bitten Bar, and entertainment. 11am. Free.

Disco Inferno: Kassam Conference Centre, Grenoble Road, Oxford. The new venue for over 30s featuring dance music from the 70s, 80s and 90s through to the present day. 8.30pm. £5 before 10pm, £10 after 10pm. 07789 428794.

Junior Basketball Under 12: Oxford Spires Academy, Glanville Road, Oxford. 9am. £5. 07827 331593.

Oxford Towpath Taskforce: Isis Lock, off Rewley Road, Oxford. Meet other local volunteers and the CRT Team, learn new practical skills, hear about other volunteer opportunities or just spend a few hours outdoors improving your local waterway environment. Litter picking, graffiti removal, painting and other towpath improvements. 10am. Free. 07920 247877.

Regular Wallingford Walks: Town Hall, Market Place, Wallingford. General walks covering the rich history of the town, but also touching on the links with Agatha Christie and Midsomer Murders. 11am. £5. 01491 836200.

Slimming World: Preston Road Community Centre, Midget Close, off Preston Road, Abingdon. 9.30am. £10 membership and £4.95 each week after. 07508 202462.

Steam and Steam Local Line: Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot. The Urban Playground Team animate a skeletal scaffold steam locomotive through scenes inspired by the slapstick comedy of Buster Keaton, the rooftop chases of James Bond, the train-jacking of the Wild West, the Heartbreak of the first World War and the dark future of inner city commuting. Pay what you think it's worth. 01235 515144.

Walk (Fieldpaths): Christopher's Wood Car Park, west end of village, Ardington. SU425881 5.5 miles A circular walk from Ardington passing two watermills. Bring refreshments for en route break, café in village at end of walk. Assistance dogs only. Joint walk with Ramblers. 10am. 01865 552531.

SUNDAY

Bingo: Marston Royal British Legion, Hadow Road, Marston. 7.30pm. Free. 01865 243991.

Bytomic Taekwondo Classes: Brookside Primary School, Bucknell Road, Bicester. 5pm. 01844 281 888.

Faringdon Folly Tower Open: Faringdon Folly Tower and Woodland, Stanford Road, Faringdon. This unusual 100ft tower is Faringdon's icon, the last major folly to be built in England. 11am. Adults £3, 11-16s £1, Under 11s free.

Fitness Pilates: East Oxford Community Centre, 44 Princes Street, Oxford, Oxford. 6.15pm. £8.

Ramblers walk: Car park at rear of King & Queen PH, Wheatley. 13-mile walk via Garsington and Toot Baldon. Bring a picnic. 10am. 07986 189081.

Summer Sundays Cream Teas: The Reading Room, The Green, Combe. 2.30pm. £4.50 for cream tea (cake, scone and tea). 01993 898348.

Summer Trails and Activities: Museum of the History of Science, Broad Street, Oxford. Discover amazing instruments and devious devices: help yourself to trails and activities. Drop-in. 12pm. Free. 01865 277280.

Vintage Bus Rides: Oxford Bus Museum, Next to Hanborough Railway Station, Long Hanborough. Free vintage bus rides will run at 12.15pm and 2.45pm. Adults £5, Over 60 £4, 5-16 £3. 01993 811003.

Zumba: Drayton Village Hall, Lockway, Drayton. 7.30pm. £5. 01235 531180.

MONDAY

Ceroc dance class: The Glee Club, 3-5 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford. A fusion of modern jive and salsa. No partner needed and no need to book, 7.30pm. £9 (or £7 after 9.45pm). 07974 388340.

Indoor Bowls (short-mat): Drayton Village Hall, Lockway, Drayton. 1.45pm. 01235 528402.

Mums Meet Mondays: Rugrats and Halfpints, Beaumont Road, Banbury. 9.30am. £1 per child. 01295250060.

Oxford 1914-1918 Family Day: Museum of Oxford, Oxford Town Hall, St Aldate's, Oxford. Meet visiting WW1 guests, from a Suffragette to a serving soldier, and find out about recruitment, fighting, life in the infantry and much more. 10.30am. Free. 01865 252334.

Seniors (Gentle!) Yoga: Drayton Village Hall, Lockway, Drayton. 11am. £5. 07766 991487.

Slimming World: Abingdon Rugby Club, Lambrick Way, Abingdon. 7.30pm. £10 membership and £4.95 each week after. 07508 202642.

West Oxford Bowls Club: Botley Park, Botley Road, Oxford. 6.30pm. £3. 01865 436277.

TUESDAY

New Abingdon Slimming World Group: Abingdon Cricket Club, Hales Meadows, Culham Road, Abingdon. 7.30pm. 07739 179872.

2121 (Abingdon) Sqn Air Training Corps: 2121 (Abingdon) Sqn premises, Wootton Road, Whitecross, Abingdon. A youth organisation with adventure training, sports, gliding and flying. 7.15pm. £8 per month. 01235 538955.

Bicester and Kidlington Ramblers: Market Place, Deddington. Leisurely circular five-mile walk in Deddington area. Leader Mary Gough. 10am. 07939 826412.

Drop-in family event – Marvellous animal masks: Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Harrisons Lane, Woodstock. 2pm. Free for kids with a paying adult. 01993 811214.

Family History helpdesk: Oxfordshire History Centre, St Luke's Church, Temple Road, Cowley. Oxfordshire Family History Society advisors available.10am. Free. 01865 358151.

Friendly Bridge Game: Yarnton Village Hall The Paddocks, Yarnton. 9.50am. £3 each session. 07766 621710.

Frys Court Craft Workshop: Frys Court, Nightingale Avenue, Greater Leys. Over 50s craft workshop. 2pm. £1 per week. 07902 664850.

Open gaming: Thirsty Meeples Board Game Cafe, Gloucester Green, Oxford. 5pm. £4.50. 01865 244247.

Ping Pong Parlour: Wahoo & The Glee Club, 3-5 Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford. Seven indoor tables for general play, games, competitions and coaching. 3pm. Free. 07795122280.

Ramblers walk: Plough PH, Great Haseley. Four-mile circular walk via Great Milton ad Little Haseley followed by pub supper. 6pm. 01844 213608.

Recycled Art – Milk Bottle Elephants (ages six to 13): Cornerstone Arts Centre, 25 Station Road, Didcot. This workshop will use old milk bottles to create colourful elephants that can decorate your room and remind you to keep recycling. All materials are provided. 10.30am. £13. 01235 515144.

Slimming World: Abingdon Cricket Club, Culham Road, Abingdon. 5.30pm and 7.30pm. 07739 179872.

Slimming World: Didcot Civic Hall, Britwell Road, Didcot. 9.30am, 11.30am, 5pm and 7pm. No need to book in advance. £10 membership and then £4.95 a week. 07788 132541.

Summer Fun: Vale & Downland Museum, Wantage. Different themed activities every Tuesday. Drop between 11am-3pm. 01235 771447.

Tea Dance: Woodstock Social Club, 44 Oxford Street, Woodstock. 2pm. £2. 01993 812094.

Tudor Tuesdays: Oxford Castle Unlocked, 44-46 Oxford Castle, Oxford. Arts and crafts workshop with the opportunity to dress up in Tudor costume and try the art of calligraphy. Suitable for ages five to 12. Drop in between 10.30am-12.30pm and 1.30-3.30pm. £1 per child. 01865 260666.

Zumba: Drayton Village Hall, Lockway, Drayton. 5.45pm. £5. 01235 531180.

WEDNESDAY

Bingo: Marston Royal British Legion, Hadow Road, Marston. 7.30pm. Free. 01865 243991.

Redtooth Poker: Queens Head, 26 Church Road, Horspath. Redtooth 8pm. Free. 01865 875567.

Slimming World: Centre 70, Kinecroft, Wallingford. 5pm and 7pm. 07739 179872.

Summer Trails and Activities: Museum of the History of Science, Broad Street, Oxford. Discover amazing instruments and devious devices: help yourself to trails and activities. Drop-in. 12pm. Free. 01865 277280.

Walk (Fieldpaths): White Hart Pub, Car Park, Wytham. SP476085 5 miles. A flat walk towards University Farm, then around Wytham Wood to Thames Path returning via King's Lock. Pub at end of walk. Assistance dogs only. 2.30pm. 01865 371985.

Witney Bytomic Taekwondo Classes: Woodgreen School, Woodstock Road, Witney. 7pm. Monthly fees apply. 01844 281888.

To get an event of any kind listed here, enter the details into our easy-to-use online database at thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/events

Please add your event no later than ten days before the day of publication.

Music

THURSDAY

Joe's Bar & Grill, 260 Banbury Road, Oxford: Tom Pilling Trio. Jazz. 8pm. Free.

The Cock Inn, Combe: Nick Gill. Classic jazz and ragtime piano/vocals. 8-11pm Free.

FRIDAY

James Street Tavern, 47-48 James Street, Oxford: Reverend Black, Blue Fish, Des Barkus. Monthly showcase with featured bands followed by open jam session. 8pm Free.

Modern Art Oxford, 30 Pembroke Street, Oxford: Delta Sleep, Bearded Youth Quest and Orchards. 7.30-11pm. £7 in advance, £9 on the door.

Burwell Hall, Thorny Leys, Witney: Alan Barnes Q'tet. Jazz. 8pm. £10 pre-ordered, £12 on door.

SATURDAY

Cowley Workers SC: Backin 4. Covers band. 8.30pm. 01865 772970.

Marston Royal British Legion: Tequila. 8pm. Free. 01865 243991.

Unicorn Theatre, Abingdon: Matufest featuring Louise Jordan and White Horse Whisperers with Lee Cuff and David Hoyland from Kadia. 1pm-10pm. £18.

SUNDAY

Exeter College Chapel, Turl Street, Oxford: Tudor Music by Candlelight – My Ladye Loves. Performed by Charivari Agreable. £17, £15 (seniors), £10 (students). 8pm. 01865 305305.

Oxford Wine Café, 38 South Parade, Summertown: Ben Holder's Tribute to Benny Goodman. Violin/vocals, piano and bass. 6.30-9pm. Free.

MONDAY

James Street Tavern, 47-48 James Street, Oxford: French & Breton Music Session. Folk music with bagpipes, hurdy-gurdys, melodeons and more. 8pm. Free.

TUESDAY

Exeter College Chapel, Turl Street, Oxford: Harpsichord Recital by Candlelight - Fancies & Caprices. A candlelit harpsichord recital by Kah-Ming Ng. £14, £12 (seniors), £10 (students). 8pm. 01865 305305.

The Bullingdon, 162 Cowley Road, Oxford: Ewen Baird Quartet. Saxophone-led jazz group. 8.30pm. Free.

WEDNESDAY

All Saints' Church, Lime Walk, Oxford: All Saints' Summer Festival Of Music & The Arts 2016. Fratres, choral ensemble. Free admission. 8pm. 07941 724326.

Exeter College Chapel, Turl Street, Oxford: Baroque Music by Candlelight – Dulcet Fifes. Performed by Charivari Agréable. £17, £15 (seniors), £10 (students). 8pm. 01865 305305.

Holywell Music Room, Holywell Street, Oxford: Jack Gibbons plays Gershwin. £16 (on door £20). 8pm. 01865 305305.

CakeSport

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Boss Ford keeps faith

Puritans all set for opener at Basingstoke

BANBURY United manager Mike Ford said he is confident his young side are capable of stepping up to a higher level, *writes Matthew Bruce*.

Ford has kept faith with the bulk of the side who won promotion to Evo-Stik Southern League Premier Division.

And is hopeful his loyalty will be rewarded when they open their campaign with a trip to Basingstoke Town on Saturday.

Ford said: "I had a good chat with the team at the weekend and I asked them why they thought I'd made very few changes to the squad.

"It's because I have faith in this group of players.

"We've got lots of talented young players who I believe can take this club forward for a long time to come – as long as we can keep hold of them."

Midfielder Ollie Stanbridge is the only significant departure, leaving the Puritans after making 500 appearances over two spells at the club.

While Saturday's side is likely to look familiar to fans who saw last season's success, Ford has bolstered his squad with a handful of experienced additions – most notably 20-goal striker Mark Janes from Didcot Town.

Midfielder Jack Self has also made the step up from Didcot, Declan Benjamin returns from Oxford City, while former Oxford United left-back David Lynn has signed from Thame United.

PLAYERS IN

Declan Benjamin (Oxford City), Jack Self (Didcot Tn), Mark Janes (Didcot Tn), David Lynn (Thame Utd).

PLAYERS OUT

Ollie Stanbridge (Aylesbury Utd), Louis Joyce (Kidlington), Richard Platt (North Leigh).

Manager Mike Ford is confident his Banbury United players are capable of stepping up a level

Banbury fall short in Wycombe clash

TITLE-CHASING Banbury fell to an 18-run defeat at home to High Wycombe in Division 1.

The defeat leaves the north Oxfordshire side 25 points adrift of leaders Finchampstead.

Garth Davson top-scored with 65 as the visitors posted 167 in the Home Counties Premier League.

Banbury spinner Luke Ryan claimed 4-12 as he mopped up the tail.

The home side got off to a poor start, falling to 6-3 and then 56-5, despite the efforts of captain Lloyd Sabin (51) and Ryan.

At 115-8 it looked as though they had too much work to do and it proved the case.

HIGH WYCOMBE

G Baker c Bradbeer b Taylor 8
G Davson run out 65
E Casterton c Phillips b Wright 14
N Hawkes b Wright 5
J Benning b Wright 0
G Russell c&b Ryan 31
D Cranfield-Thompson lbw West 3
A Duncan c Haupt b Ryan 17
A Dobb b Ryan 1
C Parsons not out 11
U Amjaid lbw Ryan 2
Extras 10
Total (all out, 55.4 ovs) 167

Fall: 1-18, 2-39, 3-61, 4-61, 5-117, 6-130, 7-148, 8-150, 9-165.

Bowling: Penhale 8-2-27-0, Taylor 8-2-16-1, Wright 18-3-59-3, West 12-0-43-1, Ryan 7.4-2-12-4, Clarke 2-1-2-0.

BANBURY

H Darby b Benning 0
O Clarke c Russell b Parsons 2
C Haupt b Benning 4
L Sabin lbw Benning 51
E Phillips lbw Benning 3
R West c Russell b Amjaid 18
L Ryan lbw Benning 22
T Bradbeer lbw Benning 3
K Penhale b Amjaid 16
O Wright lbw Dobb 14
B Taylor not out 12
Extras 4
Total (all out, 59.4 ovs) 149

Fall: 1-0, 2-6, 3-6, 4-21, 5-56, 6-101, 7-102, 8-115, 9-127.

Bowling: Benning 20-3-52-6, Parsons 14-5-18-1, Duncan 5-1-20-0, Amjaid 9-2-23-2, Dobb 6.4-1-18-1, Baker 5-0-16-0.

Banbury 6pts, H Wycombe 25

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ARIES Mar 21-Apr 19

It's time to admit what is and isn't working in your life so that you can regain control and focus. Saturn helps you to see with clarity on Monday and Wednesday what needs to be done, so listen to your instincts on these days and don't be afraid to make impulsive decisions. It's what you need to get back in the game of life. Ring now to hear why it's worth making that overdue apology.

0906 585 4360

TAURUS Apr 20-May 20

Gossip you thought to be true could well turn out to be nothing more than rumours by the end of this week, so try to be careful who you accuse please Taurus. A new friend can be found in someone you thought was going to be your enemy. Wear blue for luck in family meetings. It can soften the edge in difficult conversations. Ring now to hear who you should spend more time with.

0906 585 4361

GEMINI May 21-Jun 20

You have to embrace the opportunities life is placing before you, as they hold the key to the improved life you have been seeking. Recently, you have been frightened of change, but it's what your sign was made for. Phone calls, emails and other forms of communication make for a more interesting week, as you're about to discover you can afford to aim higher. Ring now so I can fill you in.

0906 585 4362

CANCER Jun 21-Jul 22

You have so many dreams and goals but you've been held back by the emotional blackmail which others have placed on you. Fellow Cancerians help you realise you don't need to bow down to pressure and actually bring out your stubborn side in a really good way. An ex is on your mind for all the wrong reasons. Ring now so we can talk about those many mixed emotions.

0906 585 4363

LEO Jul 23-Aug 22

You are focusing on what has happened in the past, rather than what is happening in the moment. Remember who you are a Leo. You are a sign who was born to adapt well to sudden change. Grab life with the energy and fervour your sign was born to exhibit. Your relationships are sure to benefit if you do my friend. Ring now to hear why I know you can wear your heart on your sleeve.

0906 585 4364

VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

Those who brought you down earlier in the year are about to get their come-uppance, as they realise that you are flying towards success, while their bitterness has only led to their own imprisonment. Time spent with new faces in your career shows you a better path to travel. Wear red for luck in new meetings. Ring now to hear how Venus promises a week that will benefit you.

0906 585 4365

LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

Stop worrying about what happened in the past and try to focus instead on what is happening in the here and now. You are missing out on several opportunities to have fun and relax, which is something you have not been able to do for the last fortnight, have you Libra? Family from far away give you reason to want to plan a journey. Ring now so we can talk about love and life.

0906 585 4366

SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

Life doesn't come with an instruction booklet Scorpio. That is why it is imperative that you stop setting impossible goals and work instead on putting the fun and fulfilment back into your days. A forced change in the workplace will turn out to be a blessing in disguise. Pluto brings important relationship messages to your subconscious. Ring now so we talk about recent mixed emotions.

0906 585 4367

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

You want to make changes, but you're also caught up in the emotional turmoil of trying to do the right thing for your close ones. Your element of fire forces you to say something you would normally think, but not say out loud. It's worth doing sums and figures again, as this can lead to you finding out you have more flexibility. Ring now to control Mars's argumentative behaviour.

0906 585 4368

CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

Your feelings are not moving at the same speed as others, which is sure to see you feeling frustrated and annoyed. Gain control of mixed emotions by asking the direct questions you avoided asking last week. Your ruling planet Saturn helps you to feel confident from Thursday when you find out you have support from a most unexpected corner indeed. Ring now to hear about tomorrow today.

0906 585 4369

AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

It's time to say goodbye to some faces in your life and to welcome new ones, who are certain to add colour and flavour to the coming seven days. Fellow Aquarians make it possible for you to start to live life your way. You no longer feel tied. Chance meetings stir your heart and soul and could lead to some interesting new couplings. Ring now so I can reveal your destiny.

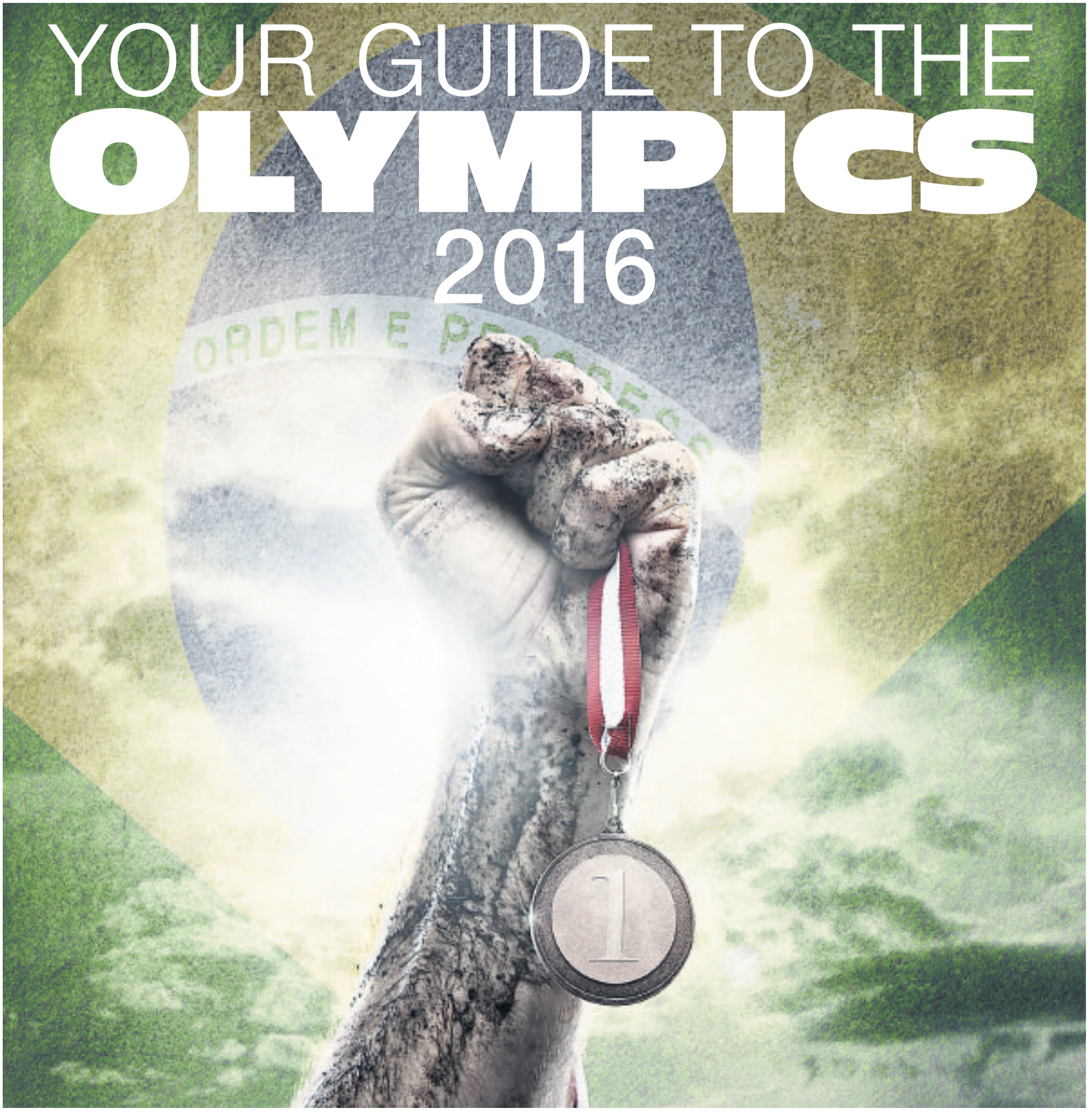
0906 585 4370

PISCES Feb 19-Mar 20

I can see that certain faces have really got under your skin lately, but I also see that you have not done a great job of explaining how you feel and what you want. Use Tuesday and Thursday as your key days to debate any hot topics. The stars will be casting you in a more mature light and it's certain to give you the answers you could not previously find. Ring now for a heart to heart.

0906 585 4371

YOUR GUIDE TO THE OLYMPICS 2016



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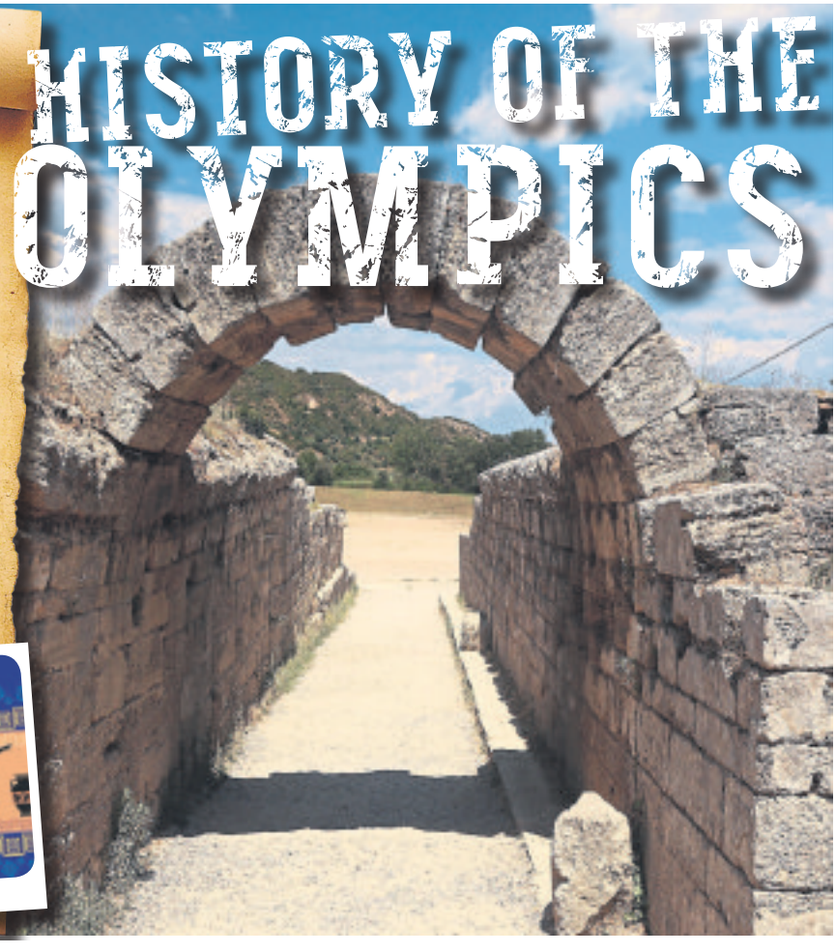
HISTORY OF THE OLYMPICS



History

The Olympic Games is a sporting tradition that can be traced back a long way.

Starting almost 3,000 years ago, it was in a peninsula of Greece, called the Peloponnese, that the Games are thought to have originated. Manuscripts point to the date of the first Olympic Games being in 776 BC – in Olympia. Olympia – the site which held the first games – is home to ruins which include athletic training areas, a stadium and temples dedicated to Hera and Zeus, among others.

These games were held in honour of Zeus at Olympia and took place every four years, known at the time as an "Olympiad".

Mythology

Mythology tends to get mixed up with historical proceedings and the events of the time are often interpreted by Grecian contemporaries as "consequences of the gods' intervention".

According to the International Olympic Committee (IOC): "There are many stories which attempt to explain their [the Games'] origin.

"According to the oldest myth, the Olympic Games were the invention of Heracles of Ida.

"According to other myths, the Games were instituted by Zeus himself.

"Others attribute the founding of the Games to the demigod Heracles, after his victorious expedition against Augias, King of Elis."

The Games in ancient Greece were held in honour of Zeus but were secular in nature.

The Games aimed to show physical strength, skills and other qualities and praise performances of the young men taking part.

However, the IOC adds: "According to specialists, the ancient Olympic Games owed their purity and importance to religion."

First events

The Games did not include team events, instead focusing solely on individual sports.

The original disciplines were running, boxing, pankration, equestrian competitions, pentathlon, and the boys' events.

The running was split into three events. The stade, a test of speed, was staged along the length of the stadium, the diaulos, which was two lengths of the stadium and the dolichos, which was 20 lengths of the stadium.

Wrestling – a form of weapon-free military exercise – only ended when a contestant admitted defeat.

The hands of the boxers were wrapped in long strips of leather for protection.

Pankration was a martial art which used both wrestling and boxing. It was considered to be one of the toughest sports.

The equestrian competition were chariot or horse races and were enjoyed for the spectacle.

The pentathlon event was made up of five events including running, long jump, discus, javelin and wrestling.

Boys' events included running, wrestling and boxing as well as other disciplines.

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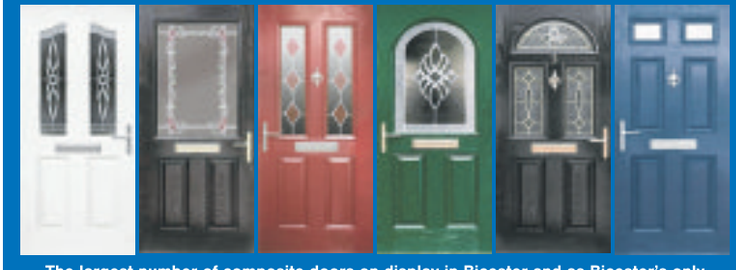

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Taking the reins in pursuit of Rio gold

Dressage is growing in popularity and Britain can boast the current world number one Charlotte Dujardin OBE, who also scooped two Gold medals at London 2012. We caught up with Charlotte to discuss the sport and the upcoming Games in Rio.

Who or what inspired you to pursue dressage?
I had some dressage lessons with my best friend Ian Cast, and he was very encouraging and told me he thought I had talent for it. Then it all grew from there.

Riding demands a lot of core strength – do you have a special regime to keep fit?
Yes, I have a personal trainer, and train in the gym five times a week. I also eat well and make sure I have a very balanced diet.

You've ridden your horse, Valegro, since he was four. How important is the relationship between rider and horse?
It's very important; you have to have that trust and bond in order to do the sport we do.

Valegro is my dancing partner but he's also my best friend and I feel very lucky to ride him.

How did you prepare for the 2012 Olympics? Did you anticipate such a successful experience?
No. I was, of course, very hopeful that we would do well, and didn't want to let the team down, but to win golds like that will be an experience I will never forget.

What are your plans after the Rio Games?
Hopefully a small holiday! Then it will be back to training the horses. I have several young horses that I hope to replicate some of the success with.

What advice would you give to youngsters who want to get involved in the sport?
To learn all aspects of horse care from the ground as well as on board the horses; to ensure you have a good trainer and believe in your goals; and to take your time with your horse and the rewards will be great. Most of all, have fun and support fellow riders.

As the most successful British dressage rider in the history of the sport, where do you see the future of British dressage?
I hope and think it is becoming more understood and popular in the mainstream. We do work really hard in this sport and to ride these tests take years of training.

The audiences are becoming larger and more diverse which is great and I hope it continues to do and that more people are inspired to take up horse riding.

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RIO FUN FACTS

Residents celebrate in style
Last year on March 1, 2015, residents celebrated 450 years since Rio was founded with a giant birthday cake, baked with several tons of flour, 2.1 tons of sugar and 3,000 eggs. The residents were able to help themselves to the cake, and many turned out to grab handfuls of it.

Street art is legal
Rio has become a canvas for street artists, thanks to its relaxed policy on graffiti. Providing they have permission and it's not on a historic building, painters are free to spray away.

King Momo rules the city during carnival
Rio explodes with energy and colour during the five days before Ash Wednesday, when millions take to the streets for the world's biggest carnival. The party starts on the Friday, when the mayor hands over the keys to the city to a man crowned as King Momo, a mythical jester who acts as the head of the festivities. Rio's carnival features hundreds of drunken bandas (street parties) and elaborate balls. The party reaches its height at the Sambódromo, when the best samba schools in the country compete for a top prize. The results are announced on Ash Wednesday, when carnival is officially over, and King Momo goes home.

The world's biggest soccer game was held in the Maracanã
On July 16, 1950, 173,850 paid spectators packed into the Maracanã stadium for the final game of the 1950 World Cup. An estimated 10 per cent of Rio's population watched as Uruguay beat the Brazilians, an event the local media dubbed the Maracanazo (a term still used when a visiting team triumphs). The game holds the world record for the highest attendance at any soccer match, ever. The stadium has since become a national symbol, what *The New York Times* calls a "cathedral of soccer" and is of course hosting the opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympics.

Christ the Redeemer is a big lightning rod
Rio's statue is often struck by lightning – disproving the theory lightning doesn't strike twice. Most cases pass without incident, but two years ago a thumb was lost.

Currency: Real
Area: 4,557 km2
Population: 14,399,000
Language: Portuguese (English and Spanish also spoken)
Climate: tropical with high rainfall
Average annual temperature: 23,2°C

Rio de Janeiro is the second largest city in Brazil. It has colourful and vibrant Latin American culture and is known for its sprawling favelas (shanty towns), lush urban rainforest, lively beaches – including Copacabana and Ipanema – and the biggest carnival in the world.

All this is guarded by the iconic Christ the Redeemer, the Art Deco statue which looks down on the city with arms outstretched from the top of the Corcovado Mountain.
The stadium of Maracanã and Sugar Loaf Mountain (Pão de Açúcar) are other well-known sights of what the locals call the "marvellous city".

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OPENING CEREMONIES

Aside from the medals and sporting achievements, some of the most memorable Olympic moments have been during the opening ceremonies.

Muhammad Ali lights the torch

After weeks of secrecy and speculation the legendary boxer Muhammad Ali awed audiences by appearing at the 1996 opening ceremonies to light the Olympic flame.
The Olympian swimmer Janet Evans ran to the stadium rim, touched her torch to Ali's, and then the 1960 Olympic gold medalist raised high the flame in his right hand. Now, the photo of Ali, suffering from Parkinson's Disease and surprising the crowd by lighting the flame, is a widely remembered and poignant Olympic scene.

Dove fail

Seoul, 1988. After the symbolic release of hundreds of doves over the Jamsil stadium, a good number of them were torched alive by the Olympic flame...

Beijing drummers

The Beijing 2008 opening ceremony was particularly spectacular. Not least for the opening which featured a whole 2008 drummers working in unbelievable unison to create an incredible musical light show by beating on illuminating drums. Impressive.

Jet pack man flies in

In Los Angeles in 1984 a man flew into the Olympic Stadium. On a jet pack.

The Queen skydives into the stadium

In the London Olympics of 2012, the Queen, in her first acting role, was seen to leave Buckingham Palace with James Bond, played by Daniel Craig, and clamber aboard a helicopter. The chopper then flew to the Olympic Park, where Bond and the Queen jumped out (well, their stunt doubles did...), arriving outside the stadium just in time for her big entrance. Even the Palace corgis got screen time in this opening ceremony vignette.

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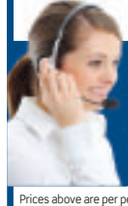

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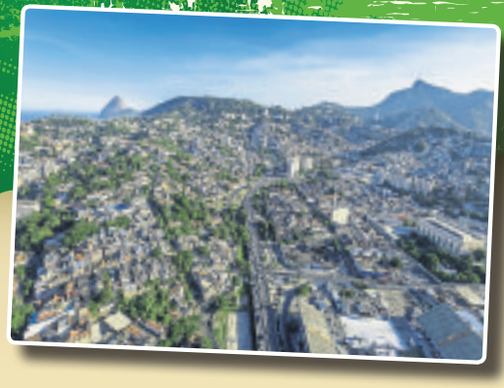
VENUES



The Olympic Games this year will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The city is the second-most populous in Brazil and won the bid to host the Olympics by seeing off competition from rival cities such as Madrid, Tokyo and Chicago.

The main venues will be spread between four zones – Barra, Copacabana, Deodoro and Maracanã – and they are all connected by high-performance transport.

This means that almost 50 per cent of the athletes will be able to get to their event venues in less than 10 minutes, and almost 75 per cent will do so in less than 25 minutes.

The events will take place in 32 different venues in Rio, with the legendary Maracanã stadium hosting arguably the biggest events.

The Maracanã – which dates back to 1950 and was recently modernised for the 2014 football World Cup – will host the finals of the football tournaments as well as the all-important opening and closing ceremonies.

The stadium is the largest venue being used for the Games, with a capacity of 78,838.

It is the home of two football clubs in Brazil – Fluminense and Flamengo – as well as Brazil's national squad.

Along with the 32 venues in Rio, there will also be five stadiums outside of the host city used to accommodate the earlier stages of the football tournaments.

One of the other big arenas to be used will be the Estádio Olímpico João Havelange, which is usually the home ground of the football club Botafogo.

The football club refers to the stadium as Estádio Nilton Santos, after Nilton Santos (who is regarded as one of the sport's greatest defenders), but had an official name-change request rejected.

The stadium can hold a capacity of 46,931 and will host some of the football matches, as well as athletics – specifically the track and field events.

One of the other larger-capacity venues worth a mention is the Sambódromo. It consists of a 700m-stretch of street which has been converted into a permanent parade ground with seating on either side.

This festival ground is traditionally the stage for samba school parades during carnivals.

For the Games, the Sambódromo will play host to archery and the marathon – having recently gone through structural work to accommodate these events.

The Sambódromo, built in 1984, previously held a capacity of around 70,000 spectators but recent construction work (including incorporating an old Brahma factory) has seen the venue's capacity rise to 90,000.

With these three venues, along with the others around Rio, the Games are sure to provide a lot of spectacle – Brazil is known for its parties, after all.

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DECIDING THE DISCIPLINES

Since the first Olympic Games where there were just nine sports played, there have been many changes to the program.
While many sports have come and gone – and sometimes come back again – athletics, cycling, fencing, gymnastics and swimming have remained constant fixtures.

In 2013, wrestling was dropped from the core sports list, opening up a place for another sport but later in a U-turn it was voted back on the list. In 2009, rugby and golf were selected to make a comeback which is why they're on this year's Olympic programme.

This year there are 28 sports in competition, 42 disciplines and 306 medal events – four more than at the Games in London in 2012 because of the return of golf and rugby (there will be two tournaments for each of these sports, one for men and one for women).

DROPPING SPORTS

There needs to be exceptional circumstances for a core sport to be dropped from the programme, such as a drug scandal, corruption or a massive drop in popularity. There were 28 different sports on the programme for the Beijing Games, which was reduced to 26 for London when baseball and softball were dropped.

CRITERIA

The Tokyo 2020 committee listed the following criteria for new sports: added value; youth appeal; attractiveness for TV, media and the general public; gender equality; minimum impact on the number of events and/or quotas, infrastructure and operational costs and complexity.

DISCONTINUED EVENTS

Added to this is a large number of discontinued events from sports that are still on the programme, such as the swimming events of plunge for distance and underwater swimming, the track and field events of the standing high jump and tug-of-war, and pigeon shooting and duelling pistol.

NEW SPORTS

There are always new and ex-Olympic sports vying for a place on the Olympic programme. Recently, the popular choices have included baseball and softball (joint bid), climbing, karate, roller sport, squash, wakeboard and wushu. Surfing, dancing, bowling and netball have also been considered.

DISCONTINUED SPORTS

Since the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, as many as 12 sports have disappeared from the schedule. These are croquet, cricket, Jeu de Paume, pelota, polo, roque, rackets, tug-of-war, lacrosse, baseball, softball and motor boating. The Winter Olympics also has a few sports and events that have been discontinued. When baseball and softball, which were dropped from the 2012 Games, it was the first time in 69 years that a sport had been removed from the Olympic programme – the last being polo in 1936.

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York's fabulously festive St Nicholas Fair is set to be bigger and better than ever in 2016 – it's open for longer, in new locations and with even more stalls to browse round. From the finest crafts, gifts and food, to festive fun and musical entertainment this is a Yuletide experience not to be missed.

Highlights & inclusions

- A visit to Leeds
- A visit to York's St Nicholas Fayre
- One night's three-star standard bed and English breakfast hotel accommodation within one and a half hour's drive of York
- Coach travel from the local area
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Lille & Bruges Christmas Markets

Two Christmas markets – one fabulous break

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Visit two of northern Europe's most enjoyable Christmas Markets! The picturesque canals, cobbled streets and historic buildings of Bruges take on a magical feel at Christmastime, and Lille is one of France's best kept secrets, with its delightful old quarter, medieval streets and squares.

Highlights & inclusions

- Visits to the Christmas Markets in Lille and Bruges
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- Return Channel crossings
- Coach travel from the local area
- Escorted by a friendly tour manager

Brussels & Bruges Christmas Markets

A fantastic value festive break

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Highlights & inclusions

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- Two nights' three-star standard bed and continental breakfast hotel accommodation in the Brussels area
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ONES TO WATCH

"We can be confident it will be our best ever away Games"

SO thinks UK Sport director of performance Simon Timson ahead of Rio, where he predicts Team GB could scoop a total of 79 medals.

But beyond the hype around big-name hopefuls like Mo Farah and Jessica Ennis-Hill, who else is likely to dazzle in the Rio sun?

Four years has passed since Team GB exceeded their medal target by 18 at London 2012. Our 65 medals – 29 of them gold – left us third in the overall medal table behind the mighty USA and China.

Never since the start of the 20th century has a host nation improved its medal total at the next summer Games.

Is there enough British potential across the 306 events in the 28 sports and 41 disciplines that make up the 2016 Olympics to make Timson's prediction a realistic possibility?

Here's our pick of the "medal maybes".

Owain Doull – cycling

WHEN Sir Chris Hoy and co hung up their cycling shorts many thought Team GB would no longer be a force in the velodrome.

But we're continually producing world-class cyclists.

One such star is 22-year-old Owain Doull from Wales, who rides for Sir Bradley Wiggins' cycling team and will be joining Team Sky after the Olympics. Doull's achievements includes silver and bronze medals at the Commonwealth Games, two gold medals from the past three European Track Championships, and back-to-back silvers in the Team Pursuit World.

Bianca Walkden – taekwondo

WALKDEN is one of Team GB's best medal hopes and a trawl through her Twitter profile will tell you why – "European Champion, World Champion, on the road fighting to become Olympic Champion!"

No wonder she's confident. Since 2008, she's picked up more medals than you have fingers on your hands including a gold at the 2015 World Championships in Russia: only the second Brit to do so. Most recent wins include the +73kg final at the German Open as part of a hat trick of gold medals for GB Taekwondo. She has shrugged off two long-term knee injuries so is looking strong.

Eilidh Doyle – athletics

DOYLE'S (nee Child) first competitive race under her married name, Doyle nailed victory in a Diamond League event in Doha – her fastest ever season opener.

This followed a successful two years where she took gold at the European Championships and silver in the Commonwealth Games.

The 400m hurdler will need to shave half a second off her personal best to be a serious gold medal contender.

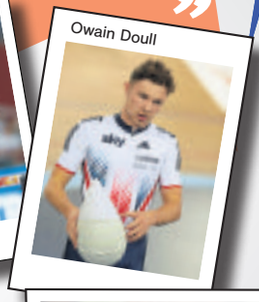
Savannah Marshall – boxing

IN women's boxing, everyone's heard of flyweight Nicola Adams.

But, up at middleweight, Marshall has revenge on her mind after failing to win a medal four years ago, despite being world champion.

The 2014 Commonwealth gold medallist has secured her place in Rio on account of her performance in the World Championships in Kazakhstan, where she won her first major medal for two years. In Brazil, much will hinge on her nerves.

Eilidh Child


Owain Doull

Savannah Marshall

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CHRIS HOY
Scot Sir Chris Hoy MBE is GB's most successful Olympic athlete of all time, with six gold medals in track cycling and one silver. Chris won his first Olympic gold in Athens 2004. He won three more in Beijing and returned to the UK as a national hero and sporting celebrity. He won a further two in London to surpass the gold medal tally of rower, Sir Steven Redgrave.

STEVE REDGRAVE & MATTHEW PINSENT
Yes, two for the price of one. Sir Steve took gold in five consecutive Games from 1984 to 2000 – in the coxed four, the coxless fours, and three in the coxless pairs as one half of the legendary partnership with Matthew Pinsent. Pinsent bagged four rowing golds from 1992 to 2004 – the first three with Redgrave, later proving he could do it without Sir Steve when he took coxless-four gold at Athens 2004.

BRADLEY WIGGINS
Nearly a professional footballer (he had trials at West Ham as a junior), Sir Bradley's London 2012 gold medal in the road time trial – his fourth gold and seventh Olympic medal in all – took him ahead of rower Steve Redgrave at the top of the list of British Olympic medal winners.

HEATHER STANNING & HELEN GLOVER
Not to be outdone by the men, Heather Stanning, a Royal Artillery captain, and Helen Glover, a PE teacher, became the first British women to win an Olympic rowing gold medal, at the same time delivering the first gold for Team GB at London 2012. Amazingly, they paired up just three years earlier.

SEBASTIAN COE
Now Lord Coe and chairman of the British Olympic Association, instrumental in bringing the Olympics to London in 2012, Coe was beaten to gold by rival Steve Ovett in the 800m, his speciality, in 1980. But he hit back to take 1,500m gold. Four years later in LA he again took 800m silver and 1,500m gold.

NICOLE COOKE
Welsh cyclist Cooke won gold at the 2008 Beijing Games in the Women's Road Race, the first for Britain in this discipline. She also became the first cyclist, male or female, to become the road race World Champion and Olympic gold medallist in the same year.

MO FARAH
Farah added the 5,000m gold to his 10,000m victory at London 2012, creating history with a time of 13mins 41.66secs. Before Farah, only six men in history had ever completed the Olympic distance double. His success is all the more incredible given his upbringing: born in Somalia, he moved to Britain aged eight unable to speak English.

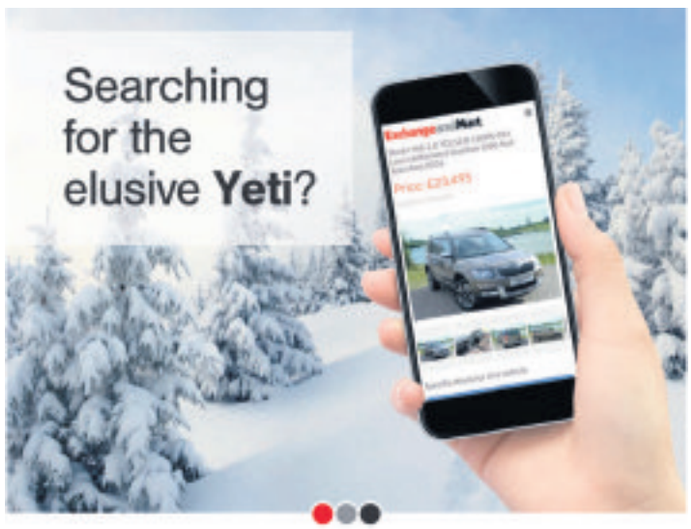
BEN AINSLIE
Ben Ainslie clinched his fourth straight gold medal at London 2012 to become the most decorated Olympic sailor in history. Ainslie, who also won silver in 1996, overtook Dane Paul Elvstrom, who won four golds up to 1960.

BECKY ADLINGTON
Adlington won 400m and 800m freestyle titles in Beijing 2008, breaking a 19-year-old world record in the 800-metre final. She was Britain's first Olympic swimming champ since Adrian Moorhouse at Seoul in 1988, and the first British swimmer to win two Olympic golds since 1908. She won bronze in the same two events at London 2012.

DALEY THOMPSON
The decathlon was one of the least popular athletic spectator events until Thompson, whose flamboyance captured the hearts of a nation. He won gold in 1980 and 1984, becoming only the second person in Olympic history to claim the decathlon gold twice, and broke the world record for the event four times.

DAME KELLY HOLMES
Brought up in a council house in Kent, Holmes served as a sergeant in the army before devoting herself to athletics full-time in 1997, making history with the 800m and 1,500m double in Athens seven years later in 2004.

LINFORD CHRISTIE
The legendary lunchbox took 100m gold at Barcelona 1992 at the ripe old age of 32. He is the only British man to have won gold medals in the 100 metres at all four major competitions: the Olympics, World Championships, European Championships and Commonwealth Games. He was the first European to break the 10-second barrier in the 100m and still holds the British record.



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SPORTS FOR BEGINNERS

Fancy yourself as a future Olympian but not done anything remotely active since the school egg and spoon race?

The greatest sportsmen and women from around the world will be in Rio shortly, competing in events ranging from athletics to wrestling, badminton to weightlifting.

Some have gone down in history for their heroic journey from novice to national hero – think ski jumper Eddie "The Eagle" Edwards – and inspired others to follow in their footsteps (or ski tracks).

So if you fancy a slice of the glory, just how possible is it to go from a sofa-dweller to a medal-winning Olympic athlete? Which are the "easiest" disciplines to get into for the greatest chance of success?

Here's our tongue-in-cheek guide to a few that might offer you the best chance of podium place.

Archery

Archers in the Olympics have to hit a target the size of a beermat from a distance of seven bus lengths. Sounds fairly straightforward, doesn't it?

Perhaps not, but since archery does not require mobility it is open to all ages and abilities, with the gold medal in the 1904 Olympics won by 64-year-old American Galen Carter Spencer. And with a bit of practice, who knows – you could soon be hitting the "gold ring" (don't, whatever you do, call it the bullseye).

And with more than 1,100 Archery UK clubs across the country, one shouldn't be too far away from you.

Fencing

With 300 or so fencing clubs in the UK, even toddlers can get involved using foam swords. There's disability-friendly fencing too. And injuries are rare – it's surprisingly one of the safest sports out there so even novices won't end up inflicting GBH on their opponents!

You'll have the chance to make history too: Britain's sole Olympic gold in fencing came over half a century ago and no medals of any colour have been won since 1964.

Clubs are organised within sports centres, youth clubs, schools, colleges and universities. Many offer evening classes.

It's not expensive to start. Most clubs' membership fee includes the cost of tuition and hire of equipment.

Four-man bobsleigh

OK, bear with us on this one. Yes, it's very fast and you have to wear a helmet so it must be dangerous, right?

Well, yes, but for at least three of the team members involved in a four-man bobsleigh, their Olympic duties can be summarised as: push then sit. There's also a kind of tricky little jump that involves probably a thousand subtleties that we may not be appreciating, but otherwise it seems pretty doable. Well, it was in *Cool Runnings*...

Table tennis

Millions of us play already – who hasn't had a game of ping-pong on a tatty old table on holiday? So we've probably got the basics sorted already.

Table tennis is dominated by China so, with a bit of effort, there's a chance to make your mark flying the flag for Britain. At elite level, it's really fast. Yes, the ball travels at speeds of 100mph and is struck more than 180 times in a minute – about three shots a second – but even the Chinese had to start somewhere.

Buy a cheap table to stick in the garage or join a club – hourly rates for hiring a court begin around £5 a session – and you don't even need to go outside to brave the elements. Bats and balls are cheap to buy too. Now all you need to do is put in some serious practice...

Any team-based sport

The very nature of team-based sports requires squads many of which never get to take off their warm-up gear.

Even if you do, hopefully the heroic efforts of your team-mates will make up for any failings you may have.

So if your aim is just to make it to the Olympics, but not necessarily actually take part or win a medal, getting into a team sport like curling, water polo, lacrosse or volleyball might be your best bet.

... And ones NOT to even bother with...

Boxing

Too much chance of serious injury, too much like hard work.

Sprinting

You'll never beat Usain Bolt so why bother?

Synchronised swimming

If you're going to put in all that effort, you want it to be for a sport that's not just plain ridiculous.

THE GOLDEN GIRLS

It was an inspiring story of ambition that got Heather Stanning and Helen Glover to Olympic gold glory at London 2012. Neither started out in rowing as a child but met through talent identification programmes, pairing up just three years earlier, and not even participating at the previous Games in Beijing!

Back then they were just spares for the eight but were so determined to prove themselves that they ran up hills, cycled, lifted weights in the gym and clocked up the miles on the lake to turn themselves into stars.

And it was a white lie about her height – or a tiptoe fib – that launched Glover's rowing career. Sir Steve Redgrave's Sporting Giants scheme were on the lookout for women at least 5ft 10in tall. She is half an inch shorter. "I stretched up a little bit to make it," she admits.

"When the [Beijing] Olympics were on, I was in my first training camp and still falling out of my boat, then watched it all in awe. That's when I decided I wanted to go to the Olympics," she recalls.

The rest, as they say, is history.

THE OLYMPIC BRAND

The Olympics may have started out simply as a showcase of amateur sporting prowess, but it's now big business.

In fact, it's one of the biggest brands in the world.

Originally dedicated to the gods, but now seemingly devoted to the dollar, this he four-yearly sporting spectacular was estimated to be worth $47.5 billion at the time of the London 2012 Games, according to US valuation specialist Brand Finance.

That put it behind only Apple ($70.6 billion) and above Google ($47.4 billion) as the world's most valuable brand.

These figures place the Olympics well above its major sponsors, such as Samsung ($38.2 billion), General Electric ($33.2 billion) and Coca-Cola ($31.1 billion).

Just over a century after Pierre de Coubertin founded the modern Olympics in Athens, the event is worth 134 times the National Bank of Greece ($354 million).

While the Greek economy is all but crippled in these difficult economic times, the Olympics is experiencing phenomenal financial growth.

These numbers are expected to go up again as the Olympics land in Rio, with revenue expected to surpass the $6 billion mark.

And as the IOC retains only 10 per cent of its income to cover operating costs, this represents a healthy profit – much of which is put back into developing sport worldwide.

Sponsorship and licensing

More than just providing products and services for the Olympics, companies pay billions to become partners, sponsors, supporters and suppliers and use the Olympics to promote their own aims.

Some of the world's major international companies, from Coca-Cola and Panasonic to General Electric and Visa, will be joining Brazil's leading industrial concerns to pump in billions of pounds to fund the Rio Games.

For many, it will be the largest and most important marketing investment they ever make.

Yet the Olympics are unique in the world of sports events in forbidding any form of advertising in the stadium or on the athletes. So the billions of worldwide TV viewers will not see any sponsors' names around the track. From just watching an Olympic broadcast, you would not know who the sponsors are.

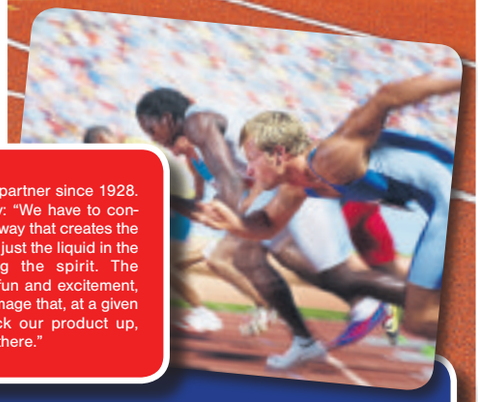
So why are all these companies associating themselves with the Games if there is no discernible benefit?

Put simply, Olympic sponsorship is not about awareness, it is about building affinity with the consumer. The Olympics offer a unique platform for companies to develop and enhance their own brand identity, by "borrowing" the values of the Olympic brand.

The Olympic Games value honour, integrity, determination and commitment to excellence, qualities most companies aspire to. The Olympics' attributes, such as dignified, worldly, global, modern, multicultural and dynamic, project a positive image of the sponsors.

And there's a hefty return on investment for those who sign Olympic partnership deals.

GE, which paid $200 million for sponsorship rights at London 2012, reportedly earned back its investment in full and has used its Olympic links to win big contracts in host nations, particularly in developing nations such as China (after Beijing 2008).



COCA-COLA'S HISTORY

Coca-Cola has been an Olympic partner since 1928. A senior executive explained why: "We have to constantly market our beverages in a way that creates the impression that there's more than just the liquid in the package, something refreshing the spirit. The Olympics do that for us. All that fun and excitement, and global nature accrues to an image that, at a given point in time, makes people pick our product up, versus a lot of other choices out there."

OLYMPIC BRAND VALUES

- Hope and optimism. The Olympics offer hope for a better world, using sport competition for all and without discrimination as an example and a lesson on humanity.
- Dreams and inspiration. The Olympics provide humanity with the inspiration to achieve personal dreams using the striving, excellence and determination of the athletes as a model.
- Friendship and fair play. The Olympics provide tangible examples of how humanity can overcome political, economic, religious and racial prejudices through the values inherent in sport.
- Joy in effort. The Olympics celebrate the universal joy in doing one's best, regardless of the outcome. Through their honour and dignity in competition, Olympic athletes teach lessons to us all and provide us the rare opportunity to see humanity at its best.

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THE LEGACY OF LONDON

ONCE the competition is over, the medals have been awarded and the athletes have returned home, what is the lasting effect of the Olympic Games on the host nation – and the billions of people who have viewed the spectacle?

Will future generations be inspired to become more active? Will deprived communities be regenerated? Will economies be boosted, profiles raised, people and places put on the map?; new courts and pitches built for people to play on?

London 2012 was dubbed "Everyone's Olympics" and "Everyone Olympic" – and from the very start aimed to inspire participation at a grassroots level and leave a lasting sporting and cultural legacy for the nation.

Despite their grandeur, the Games of the past have essentially been a stage for elite athletes to perform incredible feats, watched by a somewhat narrow audience. But London 2012 aimed to bring the Olympics off this pedestal and on to the streets; to motivate ordinary people and to show that Olympic values apply to everyone.

This work began long before the opening ceremony.

In the run-up to the Games, sponsor Adidas held events at schools nationwide to generate interest. Afterwards, Aardman Animations – creators of *Wallace & Gromit* – teamed up with Tate to make a film that involved 35,000 children in its production, thanks to £3 million of funding from Legacy Trust UK, an independent charity set up to create a cultural and sporting legacy from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

To ensure the whole country felt part of the Games, the Olympic torch travelled throughout the UK en route to its final destination. In the same spirit, several sporting events including football and sailing were held many miles away from London.

And, in a move that became known as "PIF" (People in Front), at every event the seats closest to the action were reserved for the public. Sponsors and other delegates were – unusually for occasions of this stature – seated higher up in the stands.

Today, London's Olympic site is still actively playing a part in the community. One year after the closing ceremony, the Olympic Stadium welcomed back big crowds for the Anniversary Games and is now West Ham's permanent new ground.

As for the rest of the site, the Olympic Village in East London – now known as East Village – is now a place to live, work and visit. It is home to more than 4,500 people, with commercial space available to let in the former Press and Broadcast Centres, which has been transformed into a digital quarter.

The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park reopened more than two years after the Games finished as a huge public outdoor recreation space (the size of Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens combined) boasting an aquatic centre, cycling park, multi-use sporting facilities, outdoor performance areas, as well as mountain biking trails, acres of woods and wildlife habitats and attractions like The Orbit – Britain's largest sculpture crafted from 2,000 tonnes of steel.

This is in stark contrast to other host cities such as Sydney, which wasted the best part of a decade working out what to do with its Olympic Park.

Barcelona has hardly used its iconic diving pool and aquatics centre (apart from 2013's World Championships) and Beijing's Olympic Stadium, has been mothballed as a tourist attraction.

In the end, the lasting legacy of the Games can't be assessed for many years to come, but it's hoped that the current climate of austerity and local authority budget cuts doesn't prevent the dreams, ideals and aspirations of London 2012 from coming to fruition.

London's legacy – in numbers

The Games generated a huge interest in sport across the country and many initiatives were put in place to capitalise on the enthusiasm and encourage people to get involved with the setting up of the London Legacy Development Corporation.

Since 2011, Sport England has invested £165 million in more than 2,400 community sports facilities while, in London, there have been 400,000 participants in grassroots sport and physical activities through the Mayor of London's sports legacy programme.

On an economic level, an additional 3.48 million tourist visits since 2011/12 as a result of Games-related promotion activity has led to a further £2.1 billion spending. Meanwhile, following the successful hosting of the Games, British businesses have won more than £60 million in contracts for the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro.

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Barratts Homes houses at Longford Park in Banbury, above left, and, above right, a glimpse inside the showhome's kitchen

Third phase of estate is released by developer

By Gill Oliver
gill.oliver@nqo.com

PHASE three of Longford Park, south of Banbury has just launched.

Developer Barratt Homes has almost completed 92 new homes at the site, as part of the second tranche of building. There will be four phases at Longford Park, a joint venture between Barratt, Bovis Homes and Taylor Wimpey. Nicola Watton, sales manager at Barratt Homes West Midlands, said: "The demand for homes in this beautiful part of the country has meant Longford Park is one of our most successful developments and a friendly, welcoming community, primarily made up of young families, has already taken root here."

The three house builders are contributing almost £5m to the area, as part of planning agreements with Cherwell District Council.

This includes a new school.

Homes being marketed at Longford Park from Barratt Homes are a mix of three- and four-bedroom properties, priced from £299,950 to £369,950.

Ms Watton added: "Banbury has become a property hotspot in recent years, thanks in part to its commutable distance from both London and Birmingham.

"With its selection of excellent public and private schools, a town centre that combines period buildings with Castle Quay shopping centre and its winding, picturesque canal and river network, upon which the town's fortunes were originally based, Banbury is an elegant jewel in the English countryside."

Barratt Group sold more than 14,000 homes in the year ending June 2014, making it one of Britain's biggest housebuilders.

More information is available from the sales centre on 01295 257 795, open Monday 12.30pm to 5.30pm and Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 5.30pm.

Or, call 0844 811 9933, open seven days from 8am to 9pm or see barratthomes.co.uk/longfordpark.

Contact property writer Gill Oliver with your stories on 01865 425475 or email propertyedit@nqo.com

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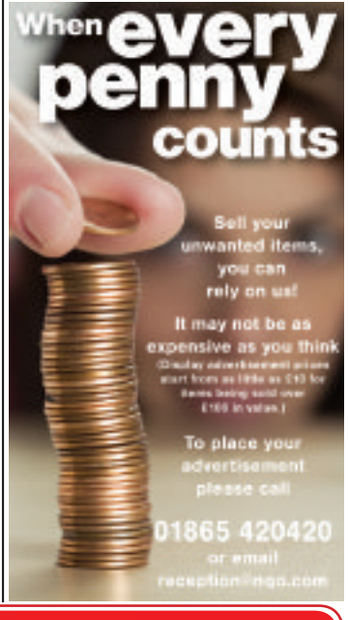

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by Jonathan Crouch

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Introduction

Kia hugely improved third generation Sportage managed to steal sales from both Qashqai-like Crossovers and RAV4-like compact SUVs. With design flair matched to engineering sophistication, it proved to be a very complete – and very desirable – family car. But how is it as a used buy?

The History

Launched in 2010, this Kia had almost nothing in common with its dumpy, unappealing predecessor – and was all the better for it. SUV-like it might be, but it delivers its virtues in a strikingly designed package that proved to be much easier for many ordinary buyers to live with than any RAV4, CR-V or Freelander. Most of those people were quite happy with the 2WD models that made up the majority of the range, but as all-weather, all-wheel drive family transport, the 4x4 versions also have plenty to offer. Ultimately, what this car claims to represent is a design that blends the best features of Qashqai-like Crossovers with RAV4-like soft-roading small SUVs. It sold until early 2015 when it was replaced by an all-new fourth generation version.

What To Look For

Our surveys found a mostly satisfied bunch of Sportage owners. We did come across a few who had issues with electronics, specifically the TFT screens. Be various suspicious of anything that looks like it may have gone off road – this car really wasn't built for that. And look for the usually interior trim tears and scuffed alloys. Other than that, it's a clean bill of health. Kia's brilliant seven-year warranty arrangement means that these vehicles very rarely fall into premature neglect.

On The Road

Behind the wheel, the feeling is far more RAV4 and Freelander SUV-like than the more ordinary family hatch-like feel of the Nissan Qashqais and Peugeot 3008s that Kia says this car competes against. A lot of buyers will think that a very good thing. It's certainly impressive the way that the designers have managed to combine a commanding driving position with a seat that's easy to slide in and out of. High-sided flanks, a nose invisible from the driver's seat and a small rear window do make this a car that demands a little adjustment if you're trading up from something more conventional, but once you adapt, you should find this Sportage to be an easy thing to live with.

Of course, you won't need us to tell you that this car isn't intended for those planning a jungle expedition. At the other extreme, it'll be equally ineffective if you want to corner Lewis Hamilton-like on your door handles, a pastime far more suited in this sector to cars like Ford's Kuga or Nissan Qashqai. So what exactly does it offer? Well, something that's probably far better suited to the kind of driving that most potential family buyers will actually do. This Kia offers a softer, more relaxed approach that balances body control, handling response and ride comfort aided by hi-tech multi-link rear suspension in a way that we've found to be very impressive indeed. If the Koreans had been able to make the variable assistance power steering a little more feelsome, it would have been even better still.

Entry-level 114bhp 1.7-ltre CRDi diesel and 133bhp 1.6-litre GDI petrol models feature two-wheel drive only: we'd recommend the livelier feel of the petrol variant, its rest to sixty capability of 10.7s making it one of the fastest MK3 Sportage variants you can buy. Further up the range though, where you'll need to venture if you want automatic transmission or 4WD, diesel's a firmly better bet, provided by the 134bhp 2.0-litre CRDi diesel. This is basically a detuned version of the 2.2-litre unit used in Kia's larger Sorrento, which means that it's very good indeed, smooth and responsive, even if it doesn't boast the ultimate power output featured by some of its direct rivals. Sixty from rest is 10.9s away en route to 112mph, a performance return very similar to that of the much thirstier and therefore minority interest 161bhp 2.0-litre petrol model, the only variant with a manual gearbox featuring five rather than six-speeds..

Both these models feature a clever Dymax intelligent 4WD system, Kia's very proud of Dymax, emphasising its 'intelligent' aspect that enables the electronics to anticipate when all-wheel drive will be needed, rather than simply reacting to changing road conditions as other similar but less sophisticated systems do. Should conditions turn slippery, your Sportage will switch automatically from being totally front-driven to being all-wheel driven, with up to 40% of its torque pushed towards the rear wheels.

Overall

Provided that you're not expecting a really sporty Crossover or an off-roader in the traditional sense of the word, it's hard to see how this MK3 model Kia Sportage would disappoint. It's well built, it rides well, there's a strong range of engines, a choice of front or four-wheel drive and – the clincher for many – it looks great.

This South Korean brand has made huge strides in terms of design sophistication, engine efficiency and marketing savvy in recent years, all of which is reflected in this car. With Kias of the past you used to need a spreadsheet to explain the rationale behind your buying decision. Now all you need is a photo.

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Motors - first for new cars

New Car Launch Model Of The Week

by Jonathan Crouch

VW teams with 'Beats Electronics'

VOLKSWAGEN hopes to gives its Polo supermini a fresh lease of life in 'Beats' special edition form. Jonathan Crouch takes a look.

Ten Second Review

Volkswagen's Polo gets a touch trendier in appealing 'Beats' special edition form. The brand has teamed up with Californian audio specialists Beats Electronics to create a smarter-looking supermini with high performance sound.

Background

The Volkswagen Polo. You know why you'd buy one: quality, class, high residuals: things like that. Qualities that are worthy but a little dull. So what about this, the Polo Beats special edition. It's still a Polo, but one with a little more about it.

As the name suggests, it gets a much better stereo, a 300-watt eight-channel system that's very different to the set-up usually provided in this car. And it looks a little smarter inside and out as well, while also getting some of Volkswagen's latest media connectivity options. There's a wide choice of engines too. Plenty to like then.

Driving Experience

The Polo Beats features a range of EU6-compliant engines. Petrol options are two three-cylinder 1.0-litre MPI units with 60 or 75PS, plus a 1.2-litre four-cylinder TSI powerplant with 90PS that can also be ordered with DSG auto transmission. Should you prefer to go diesel, there is a three-cylinder 1.4-litre TDI engine with 75PS.

And on the road? For most Polo people, many potential owners being quite happy to trade the differences that do exist for this Volkswagen model's superior long distance refinement and more impressive ride. The ride in town is as good as it is on the open road, easily shrugging off pock-marked urban surfaces. The steering system is nice to twirl around on city streets too, lacking the remote PlayStation feel of some rival electric set-ups and combining with the large glass area to make parking a doddle.

Design and Build

The sharper looks of the Polo Beats back up its class-leading sound system, with standard equipment including 16-inch 'Knight' alloy wheels. In addition, you get darkened rear light clusters and 65% tinted rear windows. The radiator grille is finished in 'High Gloss Black' and the car is enhanced with 'Flash Red', 'Pure White' or 'Black' door mirrors with integrated indicators. A unique 'Beats' badge on the B-pillar combines with 'Beats' decals on the side skirts to complete the exterior styling additions.

As well as additional speakers, the interior of the Polo Beats boasts 'Cortina Silver' trim on the centre console and air vent surrounds along with leatherette door panels and chrome trim. The front and rear carpet mats have red stitching, while the doors have unique 'Beats' sill protectors. The sporty seats have Alcantara side bolsters and a special 'Beats' cloth centre section, and there's a streak of character through the seatbelts thanks to the addition of thin vertical red stripes. LED foot well lighting rounds off the cabin changes. As for practicalities, there's a 280-litre boot which increases to 952-litres when the rear seats are folded down.

Market and Model

The Beats special edition slots into the Polo range just above 'Match' versions and prices start at just under £14,000 for the 1.0 BMT 60PS variant. So you're looking at a premium of around £1,000 over a Match model. Across the line-up, there's the option to trade up from the three-door to the five-door bodystyle for a premium of £630.

This Beats variant also adds Volkswagen's Car-Net 'App-Connect', which combines the functionality of Apple 'CarPlay', Google 'Android Auto' and 'MirrorLink' and allows the 'mirroring' of the smartphone display on the infotainment touchscreen via USB.

Cost of Ownership

Volkswagen has long been trying to drive down running costs using the clever BlueMotion Technology you'll find on all Polo models. This includes much of the stuff we're now getting familiar with on more efficient superminis, things like battery regeneration to help utilise energy that would otherwise be lost under braking. And a Stop/Start system that cuts the engine when you don't need it, stuck in traffic or waiting at the lights.

The 1.0-litre petrol engine most will choose can squeeze 60.1 miles out of a gallon of 95 RON. The more powerful 75PS version of this engine isn't going to send you to the wall either, recording 58.9mpg. Emissions for these two 1.0-litre units are 106 and 108g/km respectively.

The 1.2-litre TSI petrol unit is a great compromise between economy and effervescence, with a tiny turbocharger boosting power to 90PS. Even here, you'll get 60.1 miles per gallon, exactly the same as the entry-level 60PS 1.0-litre, with a near-identical 107g/km carbon emissions. If I had to identify the most attractive buy in the Polo range, it would probably be this powerplant, mated to the DSG gearbox if you're not too cash-strapped.

Summary

This Beats edition Polo model will be welcomed by Volkswagen dealers, offering Wolfsburg's solid supermini a little more zip in the showrooms. The Polo previously appealed on classy minimalism but most people these days want slick electronics and a greater feeling of design input inside their small cars. Volkswagen has responded and done so with typical thoroughness.

Little about the Polo's dynamics or efficiency are really best in class stuff. But what makes this car so good is that it's there or thereabouts in most categories but doesn't get beaten by anyone when it comes to perceived quality. Add to that the Beats edition embellishments and you have a very appealing little package.

Facts at a glance

CAR: Volkswagen Polo Beats
PRICE: £13,910-£17,060
INSURANCE GROUPS: 5E-11E
CO2 EMISSIONS: 93-109g/km
PERFORMANCE: [1.0 60PS] 0-62mph 16.1s / top speed 98mph
FUEL CONSUMPTION: [1.0 60PS] (combined) 60.1mpg
STANDARD SAFETY FEATURES: Electronic stability control, ABS with brake assist, twin front and side airbags
WILL IT FIT IN YOUR GARAGE?: Length/Width/Height mm 3970/1682/1462

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